

Official Report of the
One Hundred Sixty-third
Annual General

CONFERENCE

of The Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints

held in the Tabernacle
Salt Lake City, Utah

April 3 and 4, 1993

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THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTY-THIRD ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The 163rd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 3, 1993, at 10:00 A.M.

The general sessions of the conference were held at 10:00 A.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Saturday and Sunday, April 3 and 4, 1993. The general priesthood session was held on Saturday, April 3, 1993, at 6:00 P.M.

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday morning, general priesthood, and Sunday afternoon sessions. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted the Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning sessions.

Television and radio stations carried portions or all of the conference sessions to large audiences throughout the world. In addition, the general sessions and priesthood session were carried via satellite transmission to more than one thousand stake centers. The general priesthood session was also carried by closed-circuit transmission to approximately nine hundred locations in many countries.

General Authorities present

The following General Authorities of the Church attended one or more of the general sessions:

The First Presidency: ¹Gordon B. Hinckley and Thomas S. Monson

The Council of the Twelve: Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A. Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell

Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, and Richard G. Scott

The Presidency of the Seventy: Dean L. Larsen, James M. Paramore, J. Richard Clarke, Rex D. Pinegar, Carlos E. Asay, Charles Didier, and L. Aldin Porter

The First Quorum of the Seventy: Angel Abrea, Carlos H. Amado, Neil L. Andersen, Benjamin B. Banks, William R. Bradford, Ted E. Brewerton, Monte J. Brough, F. Enzo Busche, John K. Carmack, Joe J. Christensen, D. Todd Christofferson, Spencer J. Condie, Gene R. Cook, Jacob de Jager, Robert K. Dellenbach, Loren C. Dunn, Henry B. Eyring, Vaughn J. Featherstone, Jack H. Goaslind, John H. Groberg, F. Melvin Hammond, W. Eugene Hansen, Harold G. Hillam, Jeffrey R. Holland, F. Burton Howard, Marlin K. Jensen, Kenneth Johnson, L. Lionel Kendrick, Yoshihiko Kikuchi, Adney Y. Komatsu, Lynn A. Mickelsen, Alexander B. Morrison, Glenn L. Pace, H. Burke Peterson, Hugh W. Pinnock, Ronald E. Poelman, Hartman Rector, Jr., Hans B. Ringger, Earl C. Tingey, and Robert E. Wells

The Second Quorum of the Seventy: Lino Alvarez, Dallas N. Archibald, Eduardo Ayala, Merrill J. Bateman, C. Max Caldwell, Albert Choules, Jr., Gary J. Coleman, Rulon G. Craven, LeGrand R. Curtis,¹ Julio E. Dávila, John B. Dickson, Graham W. Doxey, John E. Fowler, Lloyd P. George, Han In Sang, Jay E. Jensen, Malcolm S. Jepps, Cree-L Kofford, W. Mack Lawrence, Augusto A. Lim, Richard P. Lindsay, Merlin R. Lybbert, John M. Madsen, Helvécio Martins, Gerald E.

¹President Ezra Taft Benson and Elder Clinton L. Cutler were excused.

Melchin, V. Dallas Merrell, Joseph C. Muren, Stephen D. Nadauld, Dennis B. Neuenschwander, Jorge A. Rojas, Sam K. Shimabukuro, David E. Sorensen, F. David Stanley, Kwok Yuen Tai, Horacio A. Tenorio, J. Ballard Washburn, Lowell D. Wood, and Durrel A. Woolsey

The Presiding Bishopric: Robert D. Hales, H. David Burton, and Richard C. Edgley

Other authorities present

Other Church authorities in attendance included general, stake, and ward officers.

SATURDAY MORNING SESSION

The first general session of the 163rd Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 3, 1993, at 10:00 A.M. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for the opening session was provided by the Mormon Youth Chorus, with Robert C. Bowden conducting and Bonnie Goodliffe and Linda Margetts at the organ.

To begin the meeting, the Mormon Youth Chorus sang "Praise to the Man." President Monson then made the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

We welcome you this morning from the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City in this, the first general session of the 163rd annual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. President Ezra Taft Benson, who is watching the proceedings of the conference in his apartment, has requested that I, Brother Monson, conduct this session.

We welcome all who are participating in the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders David B. Haight, Adney Y. Komatsu, and Eduardo Ayala are seated on the stand.

We welcome also the many others who are receiving these conference pro-

ceedings by satellite transmission, radio, cable, and television.

We acknowledge the General Authorities of the Church, all of whom are in attendance except President Ezra Taft Benson and Elder Clinton L. Cutler, who are excused. We also acknowledge the Relief Society, Young Women, and Primary general presidencies, who are seated on the stand.

We extend a special welcome to government, education, civic leaders, and church leaders who are present with us. And we express our appreciation to the Kauai Hawaii Stake for these beautiful flowers.

The Mormon Youth Chorus, under the direction of Brother Robert C. Bowden, with Sisters Bonnie Goodliffe and Linda Margetts at the organ, is providing the music for this session. The chorus opened the session by singing "Praise to the Man Who Communed with Jehovah" and will now favor us with "The Day Dawn Is Breaking."

Following the singing, the invocation will be offered by Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi of the Seventy.

The chorus sang "The Day Dawn Is Breaking."

Elder Yoshihiko Kikuchi offered the invocation.

President Thomas S. Monson

My beloved brothers and sisters, it is customary for the President of the Church to open each conference, to greet the Saints worldwide, and to set the tone of all that follows. Since President Benson is unable to be with us in person, I respond to his invitation to speak in his behalf. For the most part, I will present his actual words.

Last Wednesday, President Hinckley and I had a most delightful visit with President Benson. He greeted us warmly, flashed that friendly smile all of us love, and made us feel most welcome. When President Hinckley outlined the plans for conference and asked the President if it was his wish that we go forward with the arrangements and extend his love to all, he responded with a resounding "Yes!" We understand his concerns. We share his love, and we bring to you his blessings. This giant of the Lord merits our constant prayers and our abiding faith.

"The Mountain of the Lord's House"

On Friday, March 26, Sister Monson and I attended and participated in the ribbon-cutting ceremony formally opening a truly magnificent exhibit in the museum west of Temple Square. It is entitled "The Mountain of the Lord's House" and depicts the fascinating forty-year saga required for the construction of the Salt Lake Temple. Where possible, I urge all of you to see the exhibit and feel the spirit it conveys. Tuesday, April 6, the Salt Lake Temple will have a birthday. One hundred years will have passed since that glorious day when it was dedicated.

While visiting the exhibit, a reporter asked me the question, "Would President Benson like this exhibit?"

I answered, "He would love it!"

President Benson's love for temples

President Benson has always loved temples and temple work. When he felt better, each Friday he and Sister Benson

would enter the temple to participate in a session. We knew our First Presidency meeting that morning must accommodate this commitment. One morning I commented that I had to get busy and do some of my own family names that were prepared. With a smile and a twinkle in his eye, the President said, "Brother Monson, if you're too busy, why not let Sister Benson and me do your names for you." Needless to say, we found time to do the work ourselves.

President Benson's own expressions indicate this love for temples. He reflected:

"I remember so well, as a little boy, coming in from the field and approaching the old farm house. . . . I could hear my mother singing 'Have I Done Any Good in the World Today?' . . . I can still see her in my mind's eye bending over the ironing board . . . with beads of perspiration on her forehead." She was ironing long strips of white cloth, with newspapers on the floor to keep them clean. "When I asked her what she was doing, she said, 'These are temple robes, my son. Your father and I are going to the temple at Logan.'"

"Then she put the old flatiron on the stove, drew a chair close to mine, and told me about temple work—how important it is to be able to go to the temple and participate in the sacred ordinances performed there. She also expressed her fervent hope that some day her children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren would have the opportunity to enjoy those priceless blessings." He continued, "I am happy to say that her fondest hopes in large measure have been realized."

Temples are gateways to heaven

On another occasion, President Benson instructed us: "Sometimes in the peace of lovely temples, the serious problems of life find their solutions. [At times] pure knowledge flows to us there under the influence of the Spirit." Said he: "I am

grateful to the Lord for temples. The blessings of the House of the Lord are eternal. They are of the highest importance to us because it is in the temples that we obtain God's greatest blessings pertaining to eternal life. Temples really are the gateways to heaven."

He said: "May we remember always, as we [visit and work in these glorious temples], that the veil may become very thin between this world and the spirit world. I know this is true." He declared, "It is well also that we keep in mind that it is all one great program on both sides of the veil and it is not too important whether we serve here or over there, as long as we serve with all our heart, might, mind, and strength."²

President Benson, your words are welcomed. We have heard them. We shall

follow them. They, like the temples you so much love, are as a refuge from life's storms—even a never-failing beacon guiding us to safety.

I echo the feelings of one and all, President Benson, in saying we love you and ever pray for you. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. "What I Hope You Will Teach Your Children about the Temple," *Ensign*, Aug. 1985, p. 8.
2. "Temple Memories" (address given at the Denver Colorado Temple dedication, 25 Oct. 1986).

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

Elder M. Russell Ballard

Youth, live morally clean lives

This morning I want to speak primarily to the young men and young women of the Church. I pray for the Spirit to help me inspire you young people to want to live righteous lives.

Some of you may not understand our Heavenly Father's plan well enough to appreciate how important living a morally clean life is if you want to enjoy peace, happiness, and self-esteem. When you understand, the truths of the gospel will give you the guidance you need to be worthy members of the Church. When you accept the basic principles of the gospel and commit to live them, you will have the spiritual insight that will help you be young men and women of purity, integrity, and faith.

Unfortunately we live in a world that is awash in all kinds of moral pollution, including drugs, violence, filthy language, and pornography in literature, and videotapes, films, and television shows that promote illicit sex and promiscuity as

being normal. A national debate is raging to make elective abortion acceptable.

With challenges like these, you need to remember that you do not face them alone. There are people who love you and want you to be happy. We want the very best for you. Most especially, your Father in Heaven loves you and wants you to have joy and happiness. He has made marvelous promises to His faithful children who love Him, who are baptized, and who keep His commandments.

Baptismal covenants

When you entered the waters of baptism, you made a promise to the Lord that you would "humble [yourselves] before God, . . . and witness before the church that [you] have truly repented of all [your] sins, and are willing to take upon [yourselves] the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end, and truly manifest by [your] works that [you] have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of [your] sins" (D&C

20:37). You were therefore bound by covenant to “a godly walk and conversation, . . . walking in holiness before the Lord” (D&C 20:69).

Many of you were baptized when you were eight years old, and you may not realize that this is the promise you made to your Heavenly Father when you were baptized. Always remember that you are under this covenant. Your Heavenly Father has promised in return that He will give marvelous blessings to those who honor their covenants, keep His commandments, and endure faithfully to the end. They will be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise and will be “given *all* things” (D&C 76:55; italics added; see also 76:50–54, 70), including an inheritance in the celestial kingdom (see 2 Nephi 31:16–20).

The Apostle Paul wrote that “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Corinthians 2:9). Those who live clean lives and keep the commandments “shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever” (D&C 76:62). They “shall have eternal life, . . . the greatest of all the gifts of God” (D&C 14:7).

Priesthood covenants

I remind you young men who have been ordained to the priesthood that you have made an additional covenant with God. When you were ordained, you made a sacred promise with the Lord that you would honor your priesthood faithfully. (See D&C 84:33–42.) We are pleased to know that many of you are true and faithful in every way to your priesthood covenants and are preparing yourselves to receive the Lord’s promised blessings. Unfortunately we know also that too many young men of the priesthood pay little attention to the serious nature of their sacred promises made with Heavenly Father.

Keeping covenants helps resist Satan

Let me explain why you young men and women must keep your covenants you have made with God. In the pre-mortal world before we left the presence of Heavenly Father, He warned and cautioned us about new experiences we would have in mortality. We knew that we each would have a physical body of flesh and bone. Never having been mortal before, we had no experience dealing with the temptations of mortality. But Heavenly Father knew and understood. He charged us to control our mortal bodies and to make them subject to our spirits. Our spirits would have to master the physical temptations that our bodies would encounter in a temporal world. Spiritual power over the influence of Satan comes to us by keeping the commandments of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Being here on earth for the first time in our eternal existence, we are away from the protective presence of our Father in Heaven and are subject to the influence of Satan and his followers. Remember that Satan even tried to tempt the Savior into betraying the promises He had made to God. After Jesus was baptized, He went into the wilderness to fast and pray for forty days. Satan chose that moment during Christ’s hunger and physical weakness to tempt Him. But Jesus did not succumb; He stood firm.

Satan will seek to tempt us at times and in ways that exploit our greatest weaknesses or destroy our strengths. But his promises of pleasure are short-lived deceptions. His evil design is to tempt us into sinning, knowing that when we sin we separate ourselves from our Heavenly Father and the Savior, Jesus Christ. We begin to move away from Heavenly Father’s promised blessings toward the misery and anguish in which Satan and his followers languish. By sinning we put ourselves in Satan’s power.

Now, my dear young friends, I understand the struggles you face every day in keeping the commandments of the

Lord. The battle for your souls is increasingly fierce. The adversary is strong and cunning. However, you have within your physical body the powerful spirit of a son or daughter of God. Because He loves you and wants you to come home to Him, our Father in Heaven has given you a conscience that tells your spirit when you are keeping the Lord's commandments and when you are not. If you will pay more attention to your spiritual self, which is eternal, than to your mortal self, which is temporary, you can always resist the temptations of Satan and conquer his efforts to take you into his power.

The trap of sinning a "little"

You must be honest with yourself and remain true to the covenants you have made with God. Do not fall into the trap of thinking you can sin a little and it will not matter. Remember, "the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance" (D&C 1:31). Some young men and women in the Church talk openly about sexual transgression. They seem to forget that the Lord forbids all sexual relations before marriage, including petting, sex perversion of any kind, or preoccupation with sex in thought, speech, or action. Some youth foolishly rationalize that it is "no big deal" to sin now because they can always repent later when they want to go to the temple or on a mission. Anyone who does that is breaking promises made to God both in the premortal life and in the waters of baptism. The idea of sinning a little is self-deception. Sin is sin! Sin weakens you spiritually, and it always places the sinner at eternal risk. Choosing to sin, even with the intent to repent, is simply turning away from God and violating covenants.

Gratefully, many of you young men honor your priesthood, and many young women "stand for truth and righteousness" as stated in the Young Women's motto (*Young Women Leadership Handbook* [1992], p. 5). We commend you for your fidelity and integrity.

For those who have strayed, the Savior has provided a way back. But it is not without pain. Repentance is not easy; it takes time—painful time! You deceive yourself if you believe you can break the promises you have made with Heavenly Father and suffer no consequence.

Study For the Strength of Youth

You sustain the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. We prepared for you a pamphlet entitled *For the Strength of Youth*. Most of you know that this inspirational pamphlet contains guidelines to help you measure your moral conduct. I urge you to read every word over and over again so you will understand what the Lord and His Church expect of you. The First Presidency message is so important that I will quote a few statements from it.

"Our beloved young men and women,

"We want you to know that we love you. We have great confidence in you. Because of that, we talk to you frankly and honestly. . . .

"God loves you as He loves each and every one of His children. His desire, purpose, and glory is to have you return to Him pure and undefiled, having proven yourselves worthy of an eternity of joy in His presence. . . .

"We counsel you to choose to live a morally clean life. The prophet Alma declared, 'Wickedness never was happiness' (Alma 41:10). Truer words were never spoken!

"You cannot do wrong and feel right. It is impossible! . . .

"We pray that you—the young and rising generation—will keep your bodies and minds clean, free from the contaminations of the world, that you will be fit and pure vessels to bear triumphantly the responsibilities of the kingdom of God in preparation for the second coming of our Savior" (pp. 3–5).

Please make sure you have a copy of the pamphlet *For the Strength of Youth* and regularly read it. Carry the small wallet-sized summary card with you. Read carefully the section in the pamphlet that teaches principles of sexual purity, and follow the counsel with exactness.

Repentance is the way back

Those of you who have been unwise and have transgressed should read and pray about the section on repentance. This is also very important, so I will quote a few statements from this section:

"Some people knowingly break God's commandments. They plan to repent before they go on a mission or receive the sacred covenants and ordinances of the temple. Repentance for such behavior is difficult and painful and may take a long time. It is better to not commit the sin. Certain sins are of such gravity that they can put your membership in the Church and your eternal life at risk. Sexual sins are among those of such seriousness.

"Where choices have already led to sexual impurity, repentance is the way back. Talk to your parents and your bishop. They love you and will explain to you how to repent and put your life in order again. Follow their counsel.

"The miracle of forgiveness is real, and true repentance is accepted by the Lord. Full repentance of some sins requires that we not only confess and resolve them with the Lord but that we also do so with the Church. The bishop and stake president have been appointed by revelation to serve as judges in these cases.

"Only the Lord can forgive sins, but these priesthood leaders can assist the transgressor in the process of repentance. . . . If you have sinned, the sooner you begin to make your way back, the sooner you will find the sweet peace and joy that come with the miracle of forgiveness" (pp. 17-18).

Stake and mission presidents and bishops and branch presidents recently received instructions from the First Presidency on recommending worthy and qualified members for full-time missionary service. Brethren, we expect that you will teach youth leaders, parents, and the youth these long-established principles. Missionaries must be morally clean and spiritually prepared by you to serve the Lord in today's world. I urge you to follow the instructions precisely and to do all in your power to help young people avoid any sin that could disqualify them for service in the kingdom of God.

Honestly assess obedience to covenants

My dear young friends, I encourage you to take time each week to be by yourself, away from television and the crowd. Have your scriptures with you, and as you read, ponder, and pray, take an honest look at your life. Evaluate where you stand with the promises you have made with Heavenly Father. If you have a problem, talk it over with the Lord in earnest and humble prayer. Counsel with your parents; they will help you. Your bishop and your Young Men and Young Women adult leaders will help. They love you and want you to be at peace with yourself so you can partake of the sacrament worthily each week. When all is said and done, however, only you know if you are living true to your covenants made with God.

You will be grateful, when the day comes for you to attend the temple, that you followed the counsel of the Lord and chose to be morally clean. May God bless each of you young men and women with a pure heart and a sincere desire to serve the Lord worthily.

I know this Church is true. I know God lives and Jesus is the Christ. I know that if you, the youth of the Church, will have the courage to keep your covenants and follow the counsel of your parents and Church leaders, you will have the desire and the strength to live worthy lives. You then will be prepared for your

responsibilities in your homes, in the Church, and in your communities and will be prepared to return to your Heavenly Father. May God bless every one of our precious youth, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief."

President Monson

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Council of the Twelve Apostles has just spoken to us, followed by the Mormon Youth Chorus singing "A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief."

Elder J. Richard Clarke of the Presidency of the Seventy will now address us. He will be followed by Bishop Richard C. Edgley, who was sustained as Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric at the October conference.

Elder J. Richard Clarke

First, may I thank my grandchildren, who have been praying the last couple of weeks that their grandfather would have the Spirit of the Lord with him on this occasion.

The Lord of Life

Springtime in Utah brings the anticipated renewal of life. Easter approaches, and once again we ponder the Resurrection and our Father's plan of salvation. The miracles of nature and the gospel combine to remind us that the Lord of Life is a God of miracles.

For many, perhaps the most spectacular miracle would be the raising of someone from the dead. The scriptures describe the supreme joy of the widows of Zarephath and Nain whose dead sons were restored to life (see 1 Kings 17:17-24; Luke 7:11-15). The most dramatic episode tells how the Savior went to the sepulcher of His beloved friend Lazarus, who had lain dead for four days. Asking them to take away the stone, "he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes" (John 11:43-44).

Being born again through Christ

The Prophet Joseph Smith shared a profound insight which I'll rephrase in the

form of a question: *Is it any more incredible that one could be raised from the dead than to be spiritually reborn?* (see *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 191).

John the Apostle taught that the highest manifestation of our Heavenly Father's love was to send "his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (1 John 4:9).

Few understood this during His ministry. The intellectual Nicodemus was impressed with the miracles of Jesus; but even with extensive knowledge of the scriptures he could not grasp the doctrine of spiritual rebirth, the transformation of the human soul, what it means to be born again (see John 3:1-10).

Nature provides some striking parallels. The late film producer Cecil B. DeMille shared this experience:

"One day as I was lying in a canoe, a big black beetle . . . climbed up to the canoe. I watched it idly for some time.

"Under the heat of the sun, the beetle proceeded to die. Then a strange thing happened. His glistening black shell cracked all the way down the back. Out of it came a shapeless mass, quickly transformed into beautifully, brilliantly-colored life. . . . There gradually unfolded iridescent wings from which the sunlight flashed a thousand colors. . . . The blue-green body took shape.

"Before my eyes had occurred a metamorphosis—the transformation of a hideous beetle into a gorgeous dragonfly. . . . I had witnessed . . . a miracle. Out of the mud had come a beautiful new life. And the thought came to me that if the Creator works such wonders with the lowliest of creatures, what may not be in store for the human spirit!"

My testimony today is that through Jesus Christ we can be born again. We can change. We can change completely. And we can stay changed.

Such complete changes require the power of God. He gives this promise to His covenant people:

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: . . . and cause you to walk in my statutes" (Ezekiel 36:26–27).

What must we do to be born again?

The king of the Lamanites was stirred by the power of the Spirit when taught the gospel. He asked Aaron: "What shall I do that I may have this eternal life of which thou hast spoken? . . . that I may be born of God, having this wicked spirit rooted out of my breast, and receive his Spirit? . . . I will give up all that I possess . . . that I may receive this great joy" (Alma 22:15).

Note Aaron's prescription: "If thou desirest this thing, if thou wilt bow down before God, yea, if thou wilt repent of all thy sins . . . and call on his name in faith, believing that ye shall receive, then shalt thou receive the hope which thou desirest" (22:16).

Prostrating himself before the Lord, the king pled, "If thou art God, wilt thou make thyself known unto me, and I will give away all my sins to know thee" (22:18).

Rebirth of John and Shirley Withers

From the pages of our missionary journal comes an event repeated often throughout the missions of the Church.

John and Shirley Withers were successful advertising executives. They were on the fast track, indulging themselves in worldly pleasures. When contacted by our missionaries, they were impressed by their clean, sparkling countenances so unlike other young men they had known.

As the Spirit touched their hearts, the conversion miracle began. Their previous behavior became incompatible with gospel principles. A new set of priorities and values replaced worldly interests. Alcohol and tobacco habits became expendable, although with great effort. Modesty became the dress standard. Prayer, scripture study, and Relief Society and priesthood service became the focus. They were baptized and received the Holy Ghost.

As Sister Clarke and I, with some of our missionaries, assembled in the Salt Lake Temple, John and Shirley Withers, with their children, were sealed together as an eternal family. Their countenances reflected the resplendent beauty of the emancipation of the soul. We witnessed a spiritual rebirth as if from the grave.

Spiritual rebirth in a prison

I recently participated in a religious service in a state prison. As the inmates shared their testimonies, I was moved by their remorse for the behavior that necessitated their incarceration. But more impressive were their expressions of love for the Savior and hope for His mercy and forgiveness as they prayed that their repentance would be acceptable to Him.

May I share these words from one in that meeting. In reading the Book of Mormon, he has discovered the healing balm and the compassion of a loving Savior. I quote:

"Over the past month the Lord has given me so many blessings. He's changed my heart. He's taken away the anger, hatred, and fear. He's replaced these with love and hope. He's also taken away my foul mouth and my desire for

tobacco. He's helping me overcome many fleshly weaknesses.

"I always believed I had a relationship with the Lord. I see now how self-serving that relationship was. When I read about Korihor it really hit me hard. I used a lot of the same justifications and rationalizations to create a 'malleable god' that I could shape to meet my wicked needs.

"I truly want to be baptized . . . a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I believe it is His Church and know my lifelong search is over."

The role of the Atonement in spiritual rebirth

Spiritual conversion is preceded by an intense desire for change and an admission that we need divine help. Only those who humbly open their hearts have the courage to admit error and place their trust in the Lord for forgiveness and redemption.

I do not know how our Savior actually performs the sanctifying miracle of the Atonement, how He takes upon Himself our anguish of mind and body and assumes our pain and guilt; but I know He does. This leads me to these conclusions:

1. The incomprehensible severity of His suffering should convince us that we are loved and very important to our Heavenly Father. Otherwise, why would such suffering be permitted?

2. Our Savior's sacrifice had to be a voluntary act of mercy, the shedding of innocent blood, the just for the unjust, the perfect for the imperfect.

3. The Atonement must be infinite and eternal, available to all mankind.

4. I believe, to use an insurance phrase, we must pay the deductible. We must experience sorrow enough, suffering enough, guilt enough so we are conscious and appreciative of the heavier burden borne by the Savior.

My soul pains when His atonement is treated lightly, when the blessing of repentance is reduced to simply "taking care of it with the bishop," when there is brief confession without humility or godly sorrow. This attitude of entitlement rather than privilege was recently expressed by a young Church member who wrote:

"I have done bad things that I knew were bad because I've been taught that ever since I can remember. . . . I know repentance is a great gift. Without it I would be lost. I am not ready to repent of my sins; but I know that when I am ready, I can."

Such indulgence in premeditated sin shows pitiful misunderstanding of repentance. As Amulek warned, we must not procrastinate the day of our repentance until the end (see Alma 34:32-35). Judgment for us could be today or tomorrow. We must not risk our opportunity to repent. Salvation is not just an escape from the penalty of sin but deliverance from sinfulness. The truly penitent not only seek forgiveness for past sins but plead for the Savior to purge their hearts of the desire or appetite for sin.

5. Finally, we must acknowledge the gift and comply with the conditions so that redemption might be complete. Love motivates our obedience to God. To express our love and gratitude for the Atonement, we covenant with our Heavenly Father to take upon us the name of His Son and to bear witness of Him at all times and in all places, observing His commandments (see Mosiah 18:8-10).

I bear my solemn witness that full acceptance of the Atonement, with the saving ordinances of the gospel, changes lives. Through Jesus Christ, the Lord of Life, we can be raised from a death of error and sin to a spiritual rebirth of hope and eternal joy. He lives. He loves us. He pleads with us to come unto Him and find peace. That we may do so is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Bishop Richard C. Edgley

"Keep the faith"

As a young returned missionary, I and my returned missionary friends routinely bade our farewells with the words "Keep the faith." While this was a cliché given casually with very little thought, the admonition is serious, and it is the Lord's.

The Apostle Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy, declared, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7). Keeping the faith to the end has always been our charge. In the eighteenth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord admonishes, "And as many as repent and are baptized in my name, which is Jesus Christ, and endure to the end, the same shall be saved" (18:22).

I shall never forget the impression left upon me when President Joseph Fielding Smith, in his ninety-fifth year, exclaimed, "I hope to endure to the end in this life." Today, perhaps more than ever before, our faith is challenged on all fronts. This should not surprise us as it is part of God's plan. As Abraham proved himself to the Lord with unwavering faith when he took his son Isaac to the mountain to be sacrificed, we also must prove our devotion, our endurance, and our faith to our Heavenly Father.

Trials can increase our faith

We all face the normal and the expected challenges of mortality. We experience illness, we encounter transgression, we work through the difficulties of repentance, we sometimes wrestle with rebellion, and we deal with the stresses of providing for our families. These are expected. These we prepare for, and these we cope with.

For the faithful, the normal tests and trials of life need not be the enemy of faith. While we don't necessarily look forward to these obstacles and challenges, we accept them, and we build our lives and faith from them. To the faithful, the

very obstacles that we overcome draw us closer to our Heavenly Father by helping us develop a humble, submissive spirit and causing us to be grateful and appreciative of those blessings that flow from a loving Father. In short, these experiences can and often do increase our faith. The faithful do not pray to be spared the trials of life but pray that they may have the strength to rise above them. In so doing they come closer to Heavenly Father and to that state of perfection they are seeking.

Successes can test our faith

For Latter-day Saints, often the greater testing of faith—the subtle but more serious testing—comes not from the normal obstacles of mortality but from the successes of mortality. There is a strong relationship, even a cause-effect relationship, between faith and the required virtues of humility and a submissive heart, which have always been key ingredients of faith. So-called temporal achievements, whether materialistic or intellectual, when untempered with the principles of the gospel and the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, often move a person away from the fundamental principles that foster faith.

When our successes are received without proper acknowledgment to Him who is the grantor of all blessings, these same successes often lead to false pride and a deterioration of the virtues that bring us to faith. When our successes lead to self-aggrandizement or the substitution of our earthly learning for Heavenly Father's will, we jeopardize the principles upon which our faith is founded. Anything that erodes humility and submissiveness is indeed a threat to faith.

Whatever our station in life, whatever our achievements, no matter how great, a submissive heart and a humble spirit are still fundamental to our faith. We must guard against letting our worldly

successes or earthly learning become a substitution for spiritual wisdom and divine direction given through the prophets.

Warnings about worldly achievements

In the Book of Mormon, Mormon explains the deteriorating condition of the Nephites resulting from their misplaced sense of achievement in earthly matters: "For they saw and beheld with great sorrow that the people of the church began to be lifted up in the pride of their eyes, and to set their hearts upon riches and upon the vain things of the world, that they began to be scornful, one towards another, and they began to persecute those that did not believe according to their own will and pleasure" (Alma 4:8).

The Lord further warns us against relying solely upon man's strength and wisdom. He said, "Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm, or shall hearken unto the precepts of men, save their precepts shall be given by the power of the Holy Ghost" (2 Nephi 28:31).

Jacob further enlightens us with the following: "O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish" (2 Nephi 9:28). Jacob then clarifies so we may all understand that learning under the proper circumstances has an important place in our lives. He explains, "But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God" (9:29).

There are the so-called learned people who have let their intellect undermine their spiritual moorings and who would also attempt to lead the faithful away from those who are appointed by the Lord to lead. There are those who feel that our leaders are out of touch with the realities of the day. They would attempt

to lead members by substituting their own knowledge for the revelations from God to His prophets. And unfortunately there are those who would so follow. Christ warned, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15).

In an attempt to further prepare the Saints against the inevitable threatening wolves, Paul the Apostle gave this warning: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock" (Acts 20:29). Where might these wolves get sheep's clothing that is so authentic as to deceive the Lord's flock? Could it be they are clothed with exceeding riches and fine clothing, as Mormon warned? (see Alma 4:8). The vainness and frailties and foolishness of men, the learned that hearken not unto the commandments of God, as Jacob warned? (see 2 Nephi 9:28). Could it be that sometimes they may clothe themselves to appear as righteous shepherds, that even the very elect might be deceived?

Look to the Lord in humility

Yes, like Abraham of old, our faith is going to be tested. We will suffer sickness, pain, death, and tragedy. This is inevitable. This is a *major reason* why we opted to participate in mortality. We can endure these trials and tribulations because we can draw upon the gifts of heaven, which will help us see them for what they are. As we conquer them, we are drawn closer to our Heavenly Father. We feel His love, gain His knowledge and truth. We are able to meet the test and endure these to the end.

But it is that which we may not recognize for what it is that we must be concerned about—the substitution of man's will for God's inspired direction. Let us not be led astray by the sophistry of man, untempered by the principles of the gospel and the Spirit of the Lord. Let us not lose sight of those enduring God-

given principles of humility and the submissive heart that have sustained us since the restoration of the gospel. Let us seek truth and guidance from a loving Father. Let us look to our Father in Heaven and His living prophets and personal revelation for guidance. When the prophets speak, let us listen and obey.

I bear solemn witness that God lives, that He cares enough to direct His prophets for our blessing and edification. I bear witness that as we seek direction from our Father, as we follow the prophets, our faith will be sustained and enlarged. And so, my brothers and sisters, my farewell words to you today, not given casually and not given without meaning and contemplation, but given

with the soberness and the sincerity of my heart, are simply "Keep the faith." In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder J. Richard Clarke of the Presidency of the Seventy and Bishop Richard C. Edgley, Second Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, have just spoken to us.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Redeemer of Israel," following which we shall hear from Elder L. Lionel Kendrick of the Seventy.

The chorus and congregation sang "Redeemer of Israel."

Elder L. Lionel Kendrick

Scriptures are a divine road map

When we left our heavenly home to take this trip through mortality, we received instructions and divine directions that would assist us in returning home safely to our Heavenly Father. These directions were clearly communicated to prepare us for our earthly experiences.

Our Heavenly Father continues to communicate with us through revelation. These revelations are communications of divine directions. They may come to us personally or through the voice of the Lord's chosen servants—the prophets, seers, and revelators. Those revelations received by prophets are given to us in the form of scripture or by the voice of the living prophets. Thus the scriptures become a road map, a set of divine directions to assist us on our journey through mortality and our return trip home. Just as a road map that is not read, scriptures that are not searched are of little value to us in providing directions.

Are we studying our divine directions daily? When was the last time we checked our celestial compass to see if we

are still on course? The road to the celestial kingdom is one way. When we fail to search the scriptures, we may find ourselves going the wrong way on a one-way highway.

What constitutes scripture?

The Savior gave us a clear concept of what constitutes scripture. Speaking of the early elders in this dispensation, he said, "And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord" (D&C 68:4).

Scriptures reveal the divine desires of the Lord in our behalf. Each of us should have a burning desire to search the scriptures diligently and daily to seek the will of the Lord in our life. For some it may be necessary to develop the discipline to search the scriptures daily.

Love and appreciate the scriptures

How do we feel about the scriptures? Do we have the same love for the scriptures that Nephi expressed when he said:

"For my soul delighteth in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them. . . .

"Behold, my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord; and my heart pondereth continually upon the things which I have seen and heard" (2 Nephi 4:15-16).

We should show great respect and reverence for these sacred revelations. We should have feelings of gratitude for those who recorded and preserved these revelations for our research.

Jacob, one of the four major writers of the Book of Mormon, expressed concerns that he could write but a small portion of his words on the plates. He recorded that he would be limited in his writing "because of the difficulty of engraving our words upon plates" (Jacob 4:1).

Even with the difficulty of the task, Jacob felt it important to use a portion of the plates to express his tender feelings as to how he hoped we would receive the words he had written. He said, "And we labor diligently to engraven these words upon plates, hoping that our beloved brethren and our children will receive them with thankful hearts, and look upon them that they may learn with joy and not with sorrow, neither with contempt" (Jacob 4:3).

Some have suffered death to make it possible for us to have the scriptures today. Historically, the scriptures in the Bible were reserved for the clergy, with the reading of them by others being denounced. At times laws even prohibited the public or private reading of them. What a marvelous blessing we have to not only possess the most complete collection of scripture in history but also to have the freedom to search and to use them!

Purpose of the scriptures

One of the most sacred purposes for which the scriptures were written was to make it possible for all to know Christ. The scriptures teach and testify of Jesus Christ. They teach us much that we need to know and do to return to the presence of

the Savior. John was specific in giving the purpose of the scriptures when he said, "But these [things] are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31).

Nephi bore witness as to the reason he had recorded the revelations when he said, "And I, Nephi, have written these things unto my people, that perhaps I might persuade them that they would remember the Lord their Redeemer" (1 Nephi 19:18).

Scriptures are necessary for spiritual survival

The scriptures should be of the greatest importance in our lives. Our spiritual survival during the stresses of our society and the temptations of our time is greatly dependent upon the strength we will receive from searching the scriptures and listening to the words of the prophets, seers, and revelators.

People as well as nations perish without scriptures. The scriptures are spiritual food for our spirits, which is just as important as physical food for our bodies. It was so important for Lehi to have the scriptures and records which were engraved on the brass plates that the Lord commanded Nephi to slay Laban in order to obtain them. The Lord knew of their importance for the spiritual nourishment of Lehi and his descendants. He explained, "It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief" (1 Nephi 4:13).

In contrast, the Mulekites, who migrated to the American continent shortly after Lehi and his family left Jerusalem, failed to bring with them any sacred scriptures or records. Omni recorded the condition of a nation without scriptures:

"They had had many wars and serious contentions, and had fallen by the sword from time to time; and their language had become corrupted; and they had brought no records with them; and

they denied the being of their Creator" (Omni 1:17).

Even more serious than their continuous contentions and wars and the corruption of their language was the tragedy that they did not know the Savior. The pattern is the same for individuals as it is for nations. Without searching the scriptures, they cease to know the Savior.

Search the scriptures

The Savior provided counsel as to the way we should study scripture. He said, "And now, whoso readeth, let him understand; he that hath the scriptures, let him search them" (3 Nephi 10:14).

The Prophet Joseph Smith counseled: "Search the scriptures—search the revelations . . . and ask your Heavenly Father, in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, to manifest the truth unto you, and if you do it with an eye single to His glory nothing doubting, He will answer you by the power of His Holy Spirit. You will then know for yourselves and not for another. You will not then be dependent on man for the knowledge of God; nor will there be any room for speculation" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], pp. 11–12).

It is not enough to read the scriptures. Random reading results in reduced retention. We must search for specifics. We must seek for truth and increased understanding of its application in our lives.

Suggestions for scripture study

If we are to be effective in our study of the scriptures, we must prepare for it to be a special spiritual experience. The following suggestions may be helpful.

1. *Schedule.* Schedule a time to search the scriptures daily. Scripture study is such an essential part of our spiritual development that we must take time and make it a priority in our daily schedule. Our spirits should never be deprived

of the much-needed spiritual nourishment which comes from scripture study. Without this spiritual food our spirits become starved and weakened to temptation.

President Kimball taught the principle that "no father, no son, no mother, no daughter should get so busy that he or she does not have time to study the scriptures and the words of modern prophets" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1976, p. 71; or *Ensign*, May 1976, p. 47).

2. *Pray.* We should begin and end each study session with prayer. We must invite the Spirit to teach us. Nephi taught that "the mysteries of God shall be unfolded . . . by the power of the Holy Ghost" (1 Nephi 10:19).

3. *Search.* To search is to seek, to explore, to examine carefully. As we study we should do so with purpose, searching for specifics and an expansion of our vision of eternal truth. We must search for principles, doctrines, answers to questions, and solutions to problems. We should look for doctrinal relationships and for possible hidden meanings of that which has been recorded.

4. *Ponder.* To ponder is to meditate, to think, to feast, and to treasure. It is more than a mental method; it is a spiritual striving to obtain and to understand truth. We should follow the process taught by the Savior to the Nephites as he taught them sacred principles. He then instructed them, "Go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand, and prepare your minds for the morrow" (3 Nephi 17:3).

We should ponder the meanings of the things we learn from our search of the scriptures. The Apostle Paul instructed the Philippian Saints to "think on these things" (Philippians 4:8). To think involves forming mental images in the mind and focusing intently upon that which has been discovered. Nephi counseled to "feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do"

(2 Nephi 32:3). To feast is to consume, to digest, to absorb.

As we ponder, we should follow the counsel of the Savior when he said, "Treasure up in your minds continually the words of life" (D&C 84:85). This implies that we should repeat in our minds the principles we have learned and draw upon them in each of our decisions.

5. *Relate.* Nephi has counseled to "liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning" (1 Nephi 19:23). We must read as if the Lord were speaking directly to us in a personal manner.

6. *Apply.* President Marion G. Romney counseled: "Learning the gospel from the written word . . . is not enough. It must also be lived. . . . One cannot fully learn the gospel without living it" ("Records of Great Worth," *Ensign*, Sept. 1980, p. 4). As we learn a principle, we must make a real effort to apply it and to live it in our life.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks

Titles of respect

When I was young, I learned that great respect was owed to those who held the office of bishop. As a sign of that respect, we always addressed our bishop as Bishop Christensen or Bishop Calder or Brother Jones. We never called our bishop *Mr.* or by his first name, as we did in speaking to others. With the bishop, we always used an honored title.

When I was seventeen, I joined the Utah National Guard. There I learned that a soldier must use certain words in speaking to an officer. I saw this as another mark of respect for authority. I also observed that this special language served as a way of reminding both the soldier and the officer of the responsibilities of their positions. I later understood that same reasoning as explaining why full-time

We will return home safely

The scriptures are priceless possessions. If we search the scriptures, seeking for the plain and precious principles, the Lord will reveal his will unto us and we will be richly blessed. If we research the revelations and respond correctly to them, we will return home safely to Heavenly Father. To this I so testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The chorus sang "Nearer, My God, to Thee."

President Monson

Elder L. Lionel Kendrick of the Seventy has spoken to us, followed by the Mormon Youth Chorus singing "Nearer, My God, to Thee."

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

missionaries should always be called by the dignified titles of *elder* or *sister*, or the equivalent in other languages.

In my legal training I became familiar with the formal language lawyers use to address judges during court proceedings. After graduation I worked for a year as a law clerk to the chief justice of the United States. We always used the formal title of his office, Chief Justice. Similarly, communications to our most senior government leaders should be addressed in a particular way, such as Mr. President, Your Excellency, or Your Majesty. The use of titles signifies respect for office and authority.

The words we use in speaking to someone can identify the nature of our relationship to that person. They can also remind speaker and listener of the responsibilities they owe one another in that

relationship. The form of address can also serve as a mark of respect or affection.

The language of prayer

So it is with the language of prayer. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches its members to use special language in addressing prayers to our Father in Heaven.

When we go to worship in a temple or a church, we put aside our working clothes and dress ourselves in something better. This change of clothing is a mark of respect. Similarly, when we address our Heavenly Father, we should put aside our working words and clothe our prayers in special language of reverence and respect. In offering prayers in the English language, members of our Church do not address our Heavenly Father with the same words we use in speaking to a fellow worker, to an employee or employer, or to a merchant in the marketplace. We use special words that have been sanctified by use in inspired communications, words that have been recommended to us and modeled for us by those we sustain as prophets and inspired teachers.

The special language of prayer follows different forms in different languages, but the principle is always the same. We should address prayers to our Heavenly Father in words which speakers of that language associate with love and respect and reverence and closeness. The application of this principle will, of course, vary according to the nature of a particular language, including the forms that were used when the scriptures were translated into that language. Some languages have intimate or familiar pronouns and verbs used only in addressing family and very close friends. Other languages have honorific forms of address that signify great respect, such as words used only when speaking to a king or other person of high rank. Both of these kinds of special words are appropriately used in offering prayers in other languages

because they communicate the desired feelings of love, respect, reverence, and closeness.

Modern English has no special verbs or pronouns that are intimate, familiar, or honorific. When we address prayers to our Heavenly Father in English, our only available alternatives are the common words of speech like *you* and *your* or the dignified but uncommon words like *thee*, *thou*, and *thy*, which were used in the King James Version of the Bible almost five hundred years ago. Latter-day Saints, of course, prefer the latter. In our prayers we use language that is dignified and different, even archaic.

The men whom we sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators have consistently taught and urged English-speaking members of our Church to phrase their petitions to the Almighty in the special language of prayer. President Spencer W. Kimball said, "In all our prayers, it is well to use the pronouns *thee*, *thou*, *thy*, and *thine* instead of *you*, *your*, and *yours* inasmuch as they have come to indicate respect" (*Faith Precedes the Miracle* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972], p. 201). Numerous other Church leaders have given the same counsel (see Stephen L. Richards, in Conference Report, Oct. 1951, p. 175; Bruce R. McConkie, "Why the Lord Ordained Prayer," *Ensign*, Jan. 1976, p. 12; and L. Tom Perry, in Conference Report, Oct. 1983, pp. 14-15; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1983, p. 13).

Perhaps some who are listening to this sermon in English are already saying, "But this is unfamiliar and difficult. Why should we have to use words that have not been in common use in the English language for hundreds of years? If we require a special language of prayer in English, we will discourage the saying of prayers by little children, by new members, and by others who are just learning to pray."

Brothers and sisters, the special language of prayer is much more than an artifact of the translation of the scriptures

into English. Its use serves an important, current purpose. We know this because of modern revelations and because of the teachings and examples of modern prophets. The way we pray is important.

Prayer language of prophets

The English words *thee*, *thou*, *thy*, and *thine* occur throughout the prayers the prophets of the Lord have revealed for use in our day.

A revelation given in 1830, the year the Church was organized, directs that the elder or priest who administers the sacrament "shall kneel . . . and call upon the Father in solemn prayer, saying: O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ" (D&C 20:76-77, 79).

The prayer offered at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple in 1836 is another model that illustrates the language of prayer used by the Prophet Joseph Smith:

"And now, Holy Father, we ask thee to assist us, thy people, with thy grace, in calling our solemn assembly, . . .

"That thy glory may rest down upon thy people, and upon this thy house, which we now dedicate to thee, that it may be sanctified and consecrated to be holy, and that thy holy presence may be continually in this house" (D&C 109:10, 12).

This prophetic model of the language of prayer has been faithfully followed in all of the sacred petitions by which the prophets have dedicated temples to the Lord. Exactly one hundred years ago this week, at a spot not far from where I stand, President Wilford Woodruff began the dedicatory prayer of the Salt Lake Temple with these words:

"Our Father in heaven, thou who hast created the heavens and the earth, and all things that are therein; thou most glorious One, . . . we, thy children, come this day before thee, and in this house which we have built to thy most holy name, humbly plead the atoning blood of thine Only Begotten Son, that our sins may be remembered no more against us

forever, but that our prayers may ascend unto thee and have free access to thy throne, that we may be heard in thy holy habitation" (*Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, 7 Apr. 1893, p. 2; see also Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Salt Lake Temple," *Ensign*, Mar. 1993, p. 2).

When the Prophet Joseph Smith was imprisoned in the jail at Liberty, Missouri, he wrote an inspired prayer, which we now read in the 121st section of the Doctrine and Covenants. Note the special language the Prophet used in addressing our Father in Heaven:

"O God, where art thou? And where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place? . . .

"Remember thy suffering saints, O our God; and thy servants will rejoice in thy name forever" (D&C 121:1, 6).

Other prayers offered by the Prophet Joseph Smith also use the special, formal language of prayer (see *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, ed. Dean C. Jessee [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1984], pp. 283-84, 536-37).

To cite more recent examples, we are all aware that the prayers offered at these general conferences of the Church always use the special language of prayer we have learned from the examples of modern prophets and teachers.

We are also guided by the special language we read in the prayers recorded in the King James Version of the Bible and in the Book of Mormon.

The Savior's prayer language

We have scriptural record of three beautiful translated prayers the Savior offered during his earthly ministry. They are models for all of us. Notable in each of these prayers are the words *thee*, *thou*, *thy*, and *thine* instead of *you*, *your*, and *yours*.

In teaching his disciples what we call the Lord's Prayer, the Savior said, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:9; see also 3 Nephi 13:9).

In his great intercessory prayer, uttered on the night before his crucifixion, the Savior used these words:

"Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee....

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:1, 3).

The Book of Mormon records this prayer the Savior offered during his visit to the righteous remnant of Israel on the American continent following his resurrection:

"Father, I thank thee that thou hast given the Holy Ghost unto these whom I have chosen. . . .

"Father, I pray thee that thou wilt give the Holy Ghost unto all them that shall believe in their words" (3 Nephi 19:20–21).

Special language shows respect

The special language of prayer that Latter-day Saints use in English has sometimes been explained by reference to the history of the English language. It has been suggested that *thee*, *thou*, *thy*, and *thine* are simply holdovers from forms of address once used to signify respect for persons of higher rank. But more careful scholarship shows that the words we now use in the language of prayer were once commonly used by persons of rank in addressing persons of *inferior* position. These same English words were also used in communications between persons in an intimate relationship. There are many instances where usages of English words have changed over the centuries. But the history of English usage is not the point.

Scholarship can contradict mortal explanations, but it cannot rescind divine commands or inspired counsel. In our day the English words *thee*, *thou*, *thy*, and *thine* are suitable for the language of prayer, not because of how they were used anciently but because they are currently obsolete in common English

discourse. Being unused in everyday communications, they are now available as a distinctive form of address in English, appropriate to symbolize respect, closeness, and reverence for the one being addressed.

I hope this renewal of counsel that we use special language in our prayers will not be misunderstood. Literary excellence is not our desire. We do not advocate flowery and wordy prayers. We do not wish to be among those who "pray to be heard of men, and to be praised for their wisdom" (Alma 38:13). We wish to follow the Savior's teaching, "When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking" (Matthew 6:7; see also 3 Nephi 13:7). Our prayers should be simple, direct, and sincere.

We should also remember that our position on special prayer language in English is based on modern revelations and the teachings and examples of modern prophets. It is not part of the teachings known and accepted by our brothers and sisters of other Christian and Jewish faiths. When leaders or members of other churches or synagogues phrase their prayers in the familiar forms of *you* or *your*, this does not signify a lack of reverence or respect in their belief and practice but only a preference for the more modern language. Significantly, this modern language is frequently the language used in the scriptural translations with which they are most familiar.

Become mature in prayer language

We are especially anxious that our position on special language in prayers in English not cause some to be reluctant to pray in our Church meetings or in other settings where their prayers are heard. We have particular concern for converts and others who have not yet had experience in using these words.

I am sure that our Heavenly Father, who loves all of his children, hears and

answers all prayers, however phrased. If he is offended in connection with prayers, it is likely to be by their absence, not their phraseology.

When one of our daughters was about three years old, she did something that always delighted her parents. When we called her name, she would usually answer by saying, "Here me is." This childish reply was among the sweetest things her parents heard. But when she was grown, we expected her to use appropriate language when she spoke, and of course she did. As the Apostle Paul said, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Corinthians 13:11).

The same is true of prayer. Our earliest efforts will be heard with joy by our Heavenly Father, however they are phrased. They will be heard in the same way by loving members of our Church. But as we gain experience as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we need to become more mature in all of our efforts, including our prayers.

Take time to learn prayer language

Men and women who wish to show respect will take the time to learn the special language of prayer. Persons spend many hours mastering communication skills in other mediums, such as poetry or prose, vocal or instrumental music, and even the language of access to computers. My brothers and sisters, the manner of addressing our Heavenly Father in prayer is at least as important as these.

It requires a little time for adults to learn how to use the language of prayer. But it is not really very difficult. In fact, we are more than 75 percent of the way in English prayers when we simply delete *you* and *your* and substitute *thee* and *thy* (see Don E. Norton, Jr., "The Language of Formal Prayer," *Ensign*, Jan. 1976,

pp. 44-47). The special language of prayer is even easier in most other languages.

Teach prayer language to children

Modern revelation commands parents to "teach their children to pray" (D&C 68:28). This requires parents to learn and pray with the special language of prayer. We learn our native language simply by listening to those who speak it. This is also true of the language with which we address our Heavenly Father. The language of prayer is easier and sweeter to learn than any other tongue. We should give our children the privilege of learning this language by listening to their parents use it in the various prayers offered daily in our homes.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "It is a great thing to inquire at the hands of God, or to come into His presence" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938], p. 22). The special language of prayer reminds us of the greatness of that privilege. I pray that all of us will be more sensitive to the importance of using this reverent and loving language as we offer our public and private prayers.

I testify that this is the Church of Jesus Christ, which our Savior has restored in these latter days with the authority and duty to preach his gospel and his commandments to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Council of the Twelve has just addressed us.

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our concluding speaker for this session.

Elder Boyd K. Packer

Dedication of the Salt Lake Temple

Just before the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple, President Wilford Woodruff and his Counselors issued an epistle to the Saints. While a hundred years have passed, it might have been issued today. They said:

"During the past eighteen months . . . political campaigns have been conducted, elections have been held. . . .

"We feel now that . . . before entering into the Temple to present ourselves before the Lord . . . , we shall divest ourselves of every harsh and unkind feeling. . . .

" . . . Thus shall our supplications, undisturbed by a thought of discord, unitedly mount into the ears of Jehovah and draw down the choice blessings of the God of Heaven!"¹

When the Salt Lake Temple was dedicated, it had been fifty-seven years since the Lord appeared in the Kirtland Temple, keys were bestowed, and Elijah appeared, fulfilling the prophecy of Malachi 2,200 years earlier.

There were to have been temples at Independence, at Far West, and on Spring Hill at Adam-ondi-Ahman, but those temples were never built.

It had been fifty-two years since the Lord had commanded the Saints to build a temple in Nauvoo and warned that if they did not complete it within the allotted time, "your baptisms for your dead shall not be acceptable unto me; and if you do not these things at the end of the appointment ye shall be rejected as a church, with your dead, saith the Lord your God."²

The Saints built the temple, but they were driven away, and it was destroyed by the mobs.³

Colonel Thomas L. Kane wrote:

"They succeeded in parrying the last sword-thrust" of the mobs until "as a closing work, they placed on the entablature of the front . . .

"The House of the Lord:

"Built by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"Holiness to the Lord!

" . . . It was this day," he wrote, that "saw the departure of the last elders, and the largest band that moved in one company together. The people of Iowa have told me, that from morning to night they passed westward like an endless procession. They did not seem greatly out of heart, they said; but, at the top of every hill before they disappeared, were to be seen looking back . . . on their abandoned homes, and the far-seen Temple and its glittering spire."⁴

The Saints disappeared beyond the western horizon, beyond Far West, where the cornerstones set seven years earlier were still in place—led by prophets and Apostles who held the keys of the priesthood and who carried in their minds the ordinances of the temple and the authority to administer the new and everlasting covenant.

Beginnings of the Salt Lake Temple

When the Saints trickled into the Salt Lake Valley, all they owned, or could hope to get, was carried in a wagon, or they must make it themselves.

They marked off the temple site before even the rudest log home was built.

There was an architect in that first company, William Weeks, who had designed the Nauvoo Temple. But the hopeless desolation was too much for him. When President Young went east in 1848, Brother Weeks left, saying, "They will never build the temple without me."⁵

Truman O. Angell, a carpenter, was appointed to replace him. He said: "If the President and my brethren feel to sustain a poor worm of the dust like me to be Architect of the Church, let me . . . serve them and not disgrace myself. . . . May the Lord help me so to do."⁶

The isolation, which gave some relief from the mobs, was itself an obstacle. Where would they get sledgehammers and wedges with which to split out building blocks of granite? They didn't carry many of those in handcars, or in wagon boxes either.

In 1853 the cornerstone was set, and ox teams began dragging granite stones from the mountains twenty miles away.

"'Good morning, Brother,' one man was heard to say to a teamster. 'We missed you at the meetings yesterday afternoon.' 'Yes,' said the driver of the oxen, 'I did not attend meeting. I did not have clothes fit to go to meeting.' 'Well,' said the speaker, 'Brother Brigham called for some more men and teams to haul granite blocks for the Temple.'

"The driver, his whip thrown over his oxen, said, '... We shall go and get another granite stone from the quarry.'"⁷

President Woodruff had watched men cut out granite stones seventy feet square and split them into building blocks.⁸ If there was no mishap (and that would be an exception), that teamster, "too poorly clad to worship," could return within a week.⁹

The foundation

The wicked spirit, which had inspired Governor Boggs of Missouri to issue the order to exterminate the Saints and broods forever and always over the work of the Lord, had followed them west.

President Young had said when they entered the Valley, "If they let us alone ten years we would ask no odds of them."¹⁰ Ten years to the day a messenger arrived with word that Johnston's army was marching west with orders to "settle the Mormon question."

President Young told the Saints:

"[We] have been driven from place to place; ... we have been scattered and peeled. ...

"... We have transgressed no law, ... neither do we intend to; but as for any

nation's coming to destroy this people, God Almighty being my helper, they cannot come here."¹¹

The settlements were evacuated, and the Saints moved south. Every stone was cleared away from Temple Square. The foundation, which after seven years' work was nearing ground level, was covered over, and the block was plowed.

Later, when the foundation was uncovered, they found a few cracks. It was torn out and replaced.

Sixteen large, inverted granite arches were built into the new foundation. There is no record as to why they did that. That manner of construction was unknown in this country then. If someday perchance there be a massive force wanting to lift the temple from beneath, then we shall know why they are there.

Building the temple

Construction inched upward. A young married couple might have visited the construction site and returned with teenage grandchildren to the yet unfinished temple.

As the temple neared completion, James F. Woods was sent to England to gather genealogies,¹² and it was the beginning of a sacred family history work beyond anything that man had ever imagined.

John Fairbanks and others were sent to France to learn to paint and to sculpt "so that the Lord's name may be glorified through ... the arts."¹³

He left seven children for his wife to look after. He could not bear to part with her in public, so two of the children walked with him to the station for a tearful parting.¹⁴

Women contributed no less than the men to the building of the temple. Perhaps only another woman can know the sacrifice a woman makes to see that something that must be done, that she cannot do herself, is done. And only a good man knows in his heart of hearts the depth of his dependency upon his wife—

how she alone makes what must be done worth doing.

In the throng on the day of dedication was a seven-year-old boy from Tooele who would carry a clear memory of that event and a clear memory of President Wilford Woodruff for another ninety years. LeGrand Richards would one day serve in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as his father before him had done.

When he was twelve, LeGrand heard President Woodruff give his last public address. Even after he was ninety years old, Elder Richards bore clear testimony to us of those sacred events.

There have been many visitations to the temple. President Lorenzo Snow saw the Savior there. Most of these sacred experiences remain unpublished.

A place to restore the fulness of the priesthood

However imposing the Salt Lake Temple may be, the invisible temple within is the same in all temples. The ordinances are the same, the covenants equally binding, the Holy Spirit of Promise equally present.

On the day ground was broken for the Salt Lake Temple, President Brigham Young said: "Very few of the Elders of Israel, now on earth, . . . know the meaning of the word endowment. To know, they must experience; and to experience, a temple must be built."¹⁵

The Lord, commanding the Saints to build the temple in Nauvoo, said:

"For there is not a place found on earth that he may come to and restore . . . the *fulness of the priesthood*."¹⁶

"I will show unto my servant Joseph all things pertaining to this house, and the *priesthood* thereof."¹⁷

"For therein are the keys of the holy priesthood ordained."¹⁸

Priesthood conferred by ordination

Some members of the Church are now teaching that priesthood is some kind of a free-floating authority which can be

assumed by anyone who has had the endowment. They claim this automatically gives one authority to perform priesthood ordinances. They take verses of scripture out of context and misinterpret statements of early leaders—for instance, the Prophet Joseph Smith—to sustain their claims.

What is puzzling is this: with all their searching through Church history and their supposed knowledge of the scriptures, they have missed the *one simple, obvious absolute* that has governed the bestowal of priesthood from the beginning, said as simply as this:

"We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof."¹⁹ The priesthood is conferred through ordination, not simply through making a covenant or receiving a blessing. It has been so since the beginning. Regardless of what they may assume or imply or infer from anything which has been said or written, past or present, specific ordination to an office in the priesthood is the way, and the only way, it has been or is now conferred.

And the scriptures make it very clear that the only valid conferring of the priesthood comes from "one who has authority, and it is known to the church that he has authority and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the church."²⁰

Remember, it was the resurrected John the Baptist, "under the direction of Peter, James and John, who held the keys of the Priesthood of Melchizedek,"²¹ who came, in person, to restore the Aaronic Priesthood,²² and it was the resurrected Peter, James, and John who came, in person, to restore the Melchizedek Priesthood²³—facts in Church history except for which our claim to priesthood authority would be invalid.

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained that the angel who appeared to Cornelius sent him to Peter to be taught because "Peter could baptize, and angels could not, so long as there were legal officers

in the flesh holding the keys of the kingdom, or the authority of the priesthood"; and that while the Lord called Paul as "minister and . . . witness" on the road to Damascus,²⁴ he sent him to Ananias to receive instruction and authority.²⁵

The priesthood is an everlasting covenant. The Lord said, "All who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof, as were instituted from before the *foundation of the world*."²⁶

Do not miss that one simple, obvious absolute: the priesthood ever and always is conferred by ordination by one who holds proper authority, and it is known to the Church that he has it. And even when the priesthood has been conferred, an individual has no authority beyond that which belongs to the specific office to which one has been ordained. Those limits apply as well to an office to which one is set apart. Unauthorized ordinations or settings apart convey nothing—neither power nor authority of the priesthood.

If they seek to do mischief with the priesthood and with the sacred things of the temple, the Lord has said he would "blind their minds, that they may not understand his marvelous workings."²⁷

Rededicating ourselves to the Lord

In that epistle issued at the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple, the First Presidency also said:

"Can men and women who are violating a law of God, or those who are derelict in yielding obedience to His commands, expect that the mere going into His holy house and taking part in its dedication will render them worthy to receive, and cause them to receive, His blessing?"

"Do they think that repentance and turning away from sin may be so lightly dispensed with?"

"Do they dare, even in thought, thus to accuse our Father of injustice and partiality, and attribute to Him carelessness in the fulfillment of His own words?"

"Assuredly no one claiming to belong to His people would be guilty of such a thing."²⁸

The Lord promised the Saints at Nauvoo:

"If ye labor with all your might, I will consecrate [the temple site] that it shall be made holy.

"And if my people will hearken unto my voice, and unto the *voice of my servants* whom I have appointed to lead my people, behold, verily I say unto you, they shall not be moved out of their place.

"But if they will not hearken to my voice, *nor unto the voice of these men whom I have appointed*, they shall not be blest."²⁹

On this hundredth anniversary of the dedication of the temple, may we each dedicate ourselves anew to the service of the Lord.

Say the word *temple*. Say it quietly and reverently. Say it over and over again. *Temple. Temple. Temple.* Add the word *holy*. *Holy Temple*. Say it as though it were capitalized, no matter where it appears in the sentence.

Temple. One other word is equal in importance to a Latter-day Saint. *Home*. Put the words *holy temple* and *home* together, and you have described the house of the Lord!

May God grant that we may be worthy to enter there and receive the fulness of the blessings of His priesthood, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Wilford Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, and Joseph F. Smith, in James H. Anderson, "The Salt Lake Temple," *Contributor*, Apr. 1893, pp. 284–85.
2. D&C 124:32.
3. See Don F. Colvin, "A Historical Study of the Mormon Temple at Nauvoo, Illinois" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1962).
4. *The Mormons: A Discourse* (pamphlet, discourse delivered before The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 26 Mar. 1850), pp. 20–21; Archives Division, Church His-

- torical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; hereafter cited as Church Archives.
5. See Thomas Bullock Journals, 1844–1850, 8 July 1848; Church Archives.
 6. Truman O. Angell Journal, 1857–1868, 28 May 1867; Church Archives.
 7. David O. McKay, Salt Lake Temple dedication services, 21 May 1963, pp. 7–8.
 8. See Journal of Wilford Woodruff, 4 July 1889; Church Archives.
 9. David O. McKay, Salt Lake Temple dedication services, 21 May 1963, pp. 7–8.
 10. In *Journal of Discourses*, 14:108; see also 5:226.
 11. In *Journal of Discourses*, 5:226.
 12. Abraham H. Cannon Journal, 13 July 1891; Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; hereafter cited as BYU Library.
 13. John Fairbanks Diary; BYU Library.
 14. John Fairbanks Diary; BYU Library.
 15. *Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941), pp. 415–16.
 16. D&C 124:28; italics added.
 17. D&C 124:42; italics added.
 18. D&C 124:34.
 19. Articles of Faith 1:5.
 20. D&C 42:11.
 21. Joseph Smith—History 1:72.
 22. D&C 13.
 23. John came as a translated being. See D&C 7.

24. Acts 26:16.
25. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938), p. 265.
26. D&C 132:5, italics added; see also D&C 124:33.
27. D&C 121:12.
28. “The Salt Lake Temple,” p. 284.
29. D&C 124:44–46; italics added.

President Monson

Thank you, Elder Packer of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

We are grateful to the owners and operators of the many television and radio stations and cable systems for offering their facilities as a public service to bring the proceedings of this conference to a large audience in many areas of the world.

The Mormon Youth Chorus will now sing “God of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand.” The benediction will then be given by Elder W. Mack Lawrence of the Seventy, and the conference will then be adjourned until two o’clock this afternoon.

The chorus sang “God of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand.”

Elder W. Mack Lawrence offered the benediction.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The second general session of the 163rd Annual General Conference convened in the Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, on Saturday, April 3, 1992, at 2:00 P.M. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music for this session was provided by a single-adult choir from the Ephraim, Logan, Ogden, Orem, and Salt Lake institutes. Richard L. Openshaw conducted

the choir, and Richard L. Elliott was the organist.

At the beginning of the meeting, President Hinckley made the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

My beloved brethren and sisters, we welcome you to this second general session of the 163rd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ

of Latter-day Saints. We excuse President Ezra Taft Benson and Elder Clinton L. Cutler, who are watching the proceedings of the conference on television.

We extend our greetings to all who are in attendance or who are listening or watching by means of television, cable, radio, and satellite transmission in various parts of the world.

We express appreciation to the owners and operators of many radio and television stations and cable systems for their cooperation in making their facilities available to carry this conference to members and friends in many countries.

We note that Elders Neal A. Maxwell and Jeffrey R. Holland are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall.

The music for this session will be provided by a single-adult choir from the Ephraim, Logan, Ogden, Orem, and Salt Lake institutes, under the direction of Brother Richard L. Openshaw, with Brother Richard Elliott at the organ.

The choir will begin this session by singing "Arise, O Glorious Zion." The invocation will be offered by Elder Alexander B. Morrison of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Arise, O Glorious Zion."

Elder Alexander B. Morrison offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

The choir will now sing "Oh Say, What Is Truth?" President Thomas S. Monson will then present the General Authorities and general auxiliary presidencies of the Church for your sustaining vote.

The choir sang "Oh Say, What Is Truth?"

The Sustaining of Church Authorities and Officers

President Thomas S. Monson

My brothers and sisters, I shall now present to you the General Authorities and general officers of the Church for your sustaining vote.

It is proposed that we sustain Ezra Taft Benson as prophet, seer, and revelator and President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Gordon B. Hinckley as First Counselor in the First Presidency; and Thomas S. Monson as Second Counselor in the First Presidency. Those in favor may manifest it. Those opposed, if any, may manifest it.

It is proposed that we sustain Howard W. Hunter as President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles and the following as members of that Council: Howard W. Hunter, Boyd K. Packer, Marvin J. Ashton, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight, James E. Faust, Neal A.

Maxwell, Russell M. Nelson, Dallin H. Oaks, M. Russell Ballard, Joseph B. Wirthlin, and Richard G. Scott. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed.

It is proposed that we sustain the Counselors in the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain as members of the First Quorum of the Seventy the following Brethren who have been serving as members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy: Elders F. Melvin Hammond, Kenneth Johnson, and Lynn A. Mickelsen. Those in favor, please manifest it. Opposed, if any, by the same sign.

It is also proposed that we sustain Neil Linden Andersen and David Todd

Christofferson as new members of the First Quorum of the Seventy. All in favor, please manifest it. Contrary, if there be any, by the same sign.

It is proposed that we sustain the other General Authorities and general auxiliary presidencies as presently constituted. Those in favor, please manifest it. Any opposed may manifest it.

It appears that the voting has been unanimous in the affirmative. We invite the new Seventies to take their places on the stand at this time. Thank you, brothers and sisters, for your vote of love and support.

President Hinckley

My brothers and sisters, we have a Church Audit Committee. The Audit Committee is an independent agency appointed to examine all Church financial

records and reports. Having done so, the committee is asked to make a report to the conference.

This committee is composed of David M. Kennedy of Salt Lake City, former secretary of the treasury of the United States and former internationally prominent bank executive; Ted E. Davis of Salt Lake City, certified public accountant and former university executive and bank president; Donald D. Salmon of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, chartered accountant and auditor general of the province of Alberta; and James B. Jacobson of Los Angeles, prominent business executive and distinguished civic leader in Southern California.

Brother Davis will now present to the conference their report, following which Brother F. Michael Watson, secretary to the First Presidency, will present the statistical report of the Church for 1992.

The Church Audit Committee Report for 1992

Ted E. Davis

To the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Dear Brethren:

The Audit Committee is independent of all Church officers, employees, and operations and has access to all records relevant to the committee's responsibility. We have reviewed the adequacy of controls over receipts and expenditures of funds and other procedures that safeguard assets of the Church and its controlled organizations, including budgeting, accounting, and auditing systems, and the related financial statements of the Church for the year ending December 31, 1992.

Expenditures of Church funds for the year were authorized by the Council on the Disposition of the Tithes, composed of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Presiding Bishopric, as prescribed by revelation. The Appro-

priation and Budget committees administer major expenditures within approved budgets.

The Auditing Department staff consists of certified public accountants and similarly qualified auditors and is independent of all other departments. It performs financial audits, operational audits, and audits of computer systems for all Church operations worldwide. Incorporated businesses owned or controlled by the Church, for which accounts are not maintained in the Finance and Records Department, are audited by internal auditors of the Church or independent professional auditing firms. Audits of local units are performed locally. Local audit procedures are established, and audit reports are reviewed by the Auditing Department.

Based on our review of the financial and operating controls and the audit reports and responses, we are of the opinion that the budgeting, accounting, auditing,

and other control procedures have maintained adequate accountability for Church assets and obligations. In all material respects, all Church funds received and expended during the year ending December 31, 1992, have been controlled and accounted for in accordance with established Church policies and procedures.

Respectfully submitted,

Church Audit Committee
David M. Kennedy
Ted E. Davis
Donald D. Salmon
James B. Jacobson

The Church Statistical Report for 1992

F. Michael Watson

For the information of the members of the Church, the First Presidency has issued the following statistical report concerning the growth and status of the Church as of December 31, 1992. The statistics which follow are based on 1992 reports available prior to this conference.

Church units

Stakes.....	1,919
Districts.....	601
Missions.....	276
Wards and branches	20,081
Nations and territories with organized wards or branches	146

Church membership

Total membership	8,406,895
Eight-year-old children of record baptized during 1992	77,380
Converts baptized during 1992...	274,477

Missionaries

Full-time missionaries	46,025
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Prominent members who have passed away since last April

Elder Robert E. Sackley of the Second Quorum of the Seventy; Elder John H. Vandenberg, emeritus General Authority; Elder H. Verlan Andersen, former member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy; Sister Flora Amussen Benson, wife of President Ezra Taft Benson; Sister Sara Merrill Tanner, widow of President N. Eldon Tanner, Counselor in the First Presidency; Sister Ariena S. Vandenberg, widow of Elder John H. Vandenberg; and Sister Ruth Pingree Smith, widow of Elder Joseph F. Smith, former Patriarch to the Church. We also announce the passing in December 1991 of Sister Velma N. Simonsen, former counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency.

President Hinckley

Thank you, brethren. Elder David B. Haight of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will be our first speaker this afternoon.

Elder David B. Haight

I rejoice with each of you as we have joined in the sustaining of our Church leaders. We welcome Brothers Neil Andersen and Todd Christofferson as new General Authorities. Our hearts are filled with gratitude for the continuing growth of the Church as evidenced by so

many new members, more missionaries, more temples, more ward and stake meetinghouses. We are growing, and we will continue to grow as we reach out and assist those individuals seeking hope and salvation.

Available to all is our message that Jesus Christ is the literal Son of God and our Redeemer, through whom salvation comes; that Joseph Smith is the revealer of the knowledge of Christ and of salvation in this age; that the Book of Mormon is a witness of the divinity of Christ; and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord's Church upon the earth and the only organization having the authority to teach the gospel and administer its ordinances. We invite all to partake of the blessings these truths make possible.

San Diego temple open house

Today is the final day of our public showing of the new San Diego California Temple. When the gates close tonight, more than 700,000 people will have taken advantage of that opportunity.

The first two days of the open house were set aside for state and local civic leaders, clergy of other faiths, business and education leaders, and the media and the press. Several hundred accepted the invitation. It was my privilege, along with others, to welcome and speak to these guests and answer their questions.

Early in the morning on the first day, ignoring the rain, these invited guests stood in line to enter a house of the Lord. They quietly and reverently walked through the temple, gazing in amazement at the architectural beauty and appointments fitting a house of the Lord. They came to see for themselves what they had heard and read about.

Rabbi Wayne Dosick wrote in the *San Diego Jewish Times*:

"The Temple is built . . . of earthly materials to construct a place that inspires heavenly awe. This Mormon Temple uses sweeping architecture to create a space that invokes the celestial heavens that is awesome." He continued, "We thank them for reminding us how holy a place a mere building can be" ("Open House Update," *San Diego Jewish Times*, 20 Mar. 1993).

Many moving accounts have come to our attention as a result of this open house; countless hearts have been touched. Over eight thousand individuals with special needs came in wheelchairs, bringing relatives or friends to assist them. One young son paused at the entrance to the temple to carefully clean and polish the wheelchair his father was in before entering the sacred interior of the temple. A devoted father lifted his frail fifteen-year-old daughter in his arms as he carried her from her wheelchair into the brides' dressing room. She looked around and said, "Oh, this is so beautiful." With a smile on her lips and with tears in her eyes, she gently laid her head on her father's shoulder and said, "This is where I want to come to be married someday." This young girl had come to the temple from the hospital, where she has spent most of the past five years, her wish to see the temple fulfilled.

Those who have attended the open house not only have been touched by its beauty, but notes and comments indicate that many have felt a deep reverence and profound emotional impact.

The purpose of temples

For more than one hundred years that same feeling has entered the hearts of vast numbers of visitors to this Temple Square as they have seen and felt the majesty and unsurpassed beauty of the Salt Lake Temple. One hundred years after its dedication, it proudly stands as a regal monument of the faith, industry, and vision of the Saints of God who built it.

But even more majestic than the temple itself is the vision of the purpose of temples which guided the builders. That purpose is to redeem all mankind who are obedient to the laws and commandments of God.

The gospel in its fulness was revealed to Adam, and undoubtedly all religious practices are derived from the remnants of the truth given to Adam. Some religious practices given in those

early days have, no doubt, been corrupted as they have been handed down through the ages. But faithful members who understand the eternal nature of the gospel—of God's holy purpose to bring to pass the eternal life of man—understand clearly why the history of man seems to revolve around the building and use of temples (see John A. Widtsoe, "Temple Worship," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Quarterly*, Apr. 1921, pp. 53–54).

Temples in all ages

Saints of all ages have had temples in one form or another. There is evidence that temple worship was customary from Adam to Noah and that after the Flood the holy priesthood was continued; therefore, we have every reason to believe the ordinances of the temple were available to those entitled to receive them (see Widtsoe, "Temple Worship," p. 52).

The Lord "commanded Moses that he should build a tabernacle, that they should bear it with them in the wilderness, . . . that those ordinances might be revealed which had been hid from before the world was" (D&C 124:38).

In Exodus the Lord instructed Moses in meticulous detail regarding the specifications and requirements for the building of the tabernacle. "Though this was but a tent it was elaborately furnished and appointed, the choicest possessions of the people being used in its construction" (James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1924], p. 153).

It was to be portable and movable throughout the wanderings of the Israelites and served their spiritual needs for more than five hundred years. Utility and sublime grandeur were blended in the construction of this unique edifice. This was also true of Solomon's temple, which superseded the tabernacle as the permanent sanctuary of the Lord, and of temples built by His authority today.

The center of the community in ancient Israel was the temple. It is an institution of the greatest antiquity.

Redeeming the dead

One of the purposes of temples is to provide a place where redemption of the dead may be made possible by providing the necessary saving ordinances for them by living proxies.

A great responsibility is associated with the supernal work of the redemption of the dead. In a funeral sermon for his close friend King Follett, Joseph the Prophet said, "The greatest responsibility in this world that God has laid upon us is to seek after our dead" (*History of the Church*, 6:313).

In seeking after our dead ancestors, we may have visions of tedious poring over musty books and microfilms and years of searching unless we possess the vision of this great latter-day work and understand how to proceed.

The Church Family History Department has microfilmed vital records for about two billion individuals. All that we have to do for a given ancestor is hope his or her records exist—and then find them.

Three principles to guide your search

It isn't always easy. But as you pursue your search, keep these three principles in mind:

First, the Lord never asks the impossible—often the difficult, but never the impossible.

Some may feel that they have conscientiously sought the Spirit in the task of finding ancestral information without success and therefore attribute their lack of success to insufficient faith. If you have felt this way, I suggest patience. Give the Lord time. Have faith that in His due time, all of the information you need will become available. But in the meantime, ask the Lord to direct your attention to other ancestors whose information is more accessible.

There is also available to you another valuable source of help. Knowledgeable family history consultants are now available in your ward and stake to assist you in your searching for your ancestors.

Second, begin where you are. Take one step at a time. You know key information about the lives of your parents. Record their information and then move backward a generation at a time, watching for unbaptized, unendowed, and unsealed ancestors.

Third, don't try to do everything at once. King Benjamin taught, "And see that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength" (Mosiah 4:27).

Prayerfully determine what you should do for your ancestors. Many factors affect this: what other family members might have done already, your own abilities and interests, the time you have available. But it is important that you *do something*.

Luella Boyd's temple attendance

Regular temple attendance is one of the simplest ways you can bless those who are waiting in the spirit world. If you live near a temple, partake of the opportunity to go *often* and *regularly*. If you live some distance from a temple, plan excursions so that you too might be uplifted and edified through this most satisfying and much-needed labor of love.

Eighty-three-year-old Luella Boyd, a widow, would leave her home in Basin, Wyoming, at five o'clock in the morning, drive seven hours to the temple in Idaho Falls, arriving about noon, and then participate in four endowment sessions. The next morning she would be at the temple as it opened and attend eight more sessions, going without lunch. On the third day she would start at five o'clock in the morning and complete four endowments by noon, then drive home to Basin, Wyoming, arriving at eight o'clock in the

evening. Sixteen sessions, six hundred miles, three days, eighty-three years old! One year she did this *eleven* times, missing only one month because of bad weather.

The most exceptional part of this story is that she currently is serving as a Family History missionary right here in Salt Lake City. Remember, Sister Boyd is eighty-three years old. And you and I think we are busy! What a marvelous spirit and dedication! She is one of 365 full-time Family History missionaries serving in Salt Lake having a remarkable spiritual experience.

Saviors on Mount Zion

After you have accomplished the temple work for your immediate ancestors, identify the difficult-to-find ancestors, serve in Family Record Extraction, or create a computer version of your family records to share with family members and others through the Church's Ancestral File™. All of these activities help provide the sacred ordinances of the temple for your ancestors. If you will do this, you will know the indescribable joy of being a savior on Mount Zion to a waiting ancestor whom you have helped.

The Lord has poured out His Spirit upon His children, which is manifest in new technology, simplified procedures, and expanding resources, which enable us to accelerate our progress in the redemption of the dead.

Needed information will come

When we have conscientiously done all we can to locate records of our ancestors, the Lord will direct our attention to obscure records in unlikely places where ancestral information has been preserved.

A dedicated Family History missionary could not read the microfilm information for one woman. He could not decipher it. He knelt at his work area to ask the Lord for help but still could not read the microfilm. He knelt again and

petitioned the Lord but still could not read it. The third time he knelt down and suggested to the Lord that he felt that this woman was waiting for her work to be done and if he couldn't read the microfilm, how could this take place? As he got up and looked at the microfilm again, it was perfectly clear.

I believe that when you diligently seek after your ancestors—in faith—needed information will come to you even when no mortal records of their lives are available.

A vast and grand work

Our labor for our ancestors is part of the divine plan of our Heavenly Father. It is a momentous assignment given to His Church, which we *will* complete because He has ordained it. This work is a powerful witness of the divine mission of Joseph Smith, through whom it was revealed.

Elder John A. Widtsoe made this remarkable statement: "When the history of human thought shall be written from the point of view of temple worship, it may well be found that temples and the work done in them have been the dominating influence in shaping human thought from the beginning of the race. Even today," he continued, "political con-

troversies are as nothing in determining the temper of a people, as compared with religious sentiments and convictions, especially as practiced in the temples of the people" ("Temple Worship," p. 52).

The salvation of our Heavenly Father's children from Adam and Eve to the present generation is the most important work in time and eternity. Our joy—or our disappointment—in the eternities may hinge on our willing participation in this great latter-day work.

President Spencer W. Kimball said, "The more clearly we see eternity, the more obvious it becomes that the Lord's work . . . is one vast and grand work with striking similarities on each side of the veil" ("The Things of Eternity—Stand We in Jeopardy?" *Ensign*, Jan. 1977, p. 3).

God bless us to love our ancestors and to be worthy of temple participation. I declare this work is true, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder David B. Haight has just addressed us.

We shall now hear from Elder John M. Madsen, followed by V. Dallas Merrill, who were called as members of the Seventy since last April conference.

Elder John M. Madsen

My beloved brothers and sisters, I am filled with an overwhelming sense of joy and gratitude for the transcendent events which took place in the Kirtland Temple 157 years ago today. And I wish to pay humble tribute to my parents, who raised me "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Enos 1:1).

"I the Lord am with you"

I love the words of the Lord given to all who are called and appointed to go

forth and preach the gospel in these latter days: "O ye my servants . . . , be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the living God, that I was, that I am, and that I am to come" (D&C 68:5–6).

All who know and understand the glorious work of redemption wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ and all who know of his majesty and power and promises understand why they are to be of good

cheer. They who have come to know him do not fear! They look unto him in "every thought." They "doubt not," and they "fear not" (D&C 6:36). They know that he, the Lord Jesus Christ, is with them and that he will stand by them! (see D&C 6:32; 29:4-7; 32:3; 84:87-88).

"Be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you."

A sacred charge: "Bear record of me"

Following this comforting and sacred promise is a serious and equally sacred charge, even a commandment which cannot be ignored: "And ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the living God, that I was, that I am, and that I am to come" (D&C 68:6).

Why this sacred charge, this commandment of the Lord to his servants? The Lord answers:

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

"For strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the lives, and few there be that find it, because ye receive me not in the world neither do ye know me" (D&C 132:22).

"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

All nations will know the Lord's identity

No doctrine is more fundamental to an understanding of the plan of salvation than the doctrine which reveals the true identity and role of Jesus Christ.

But how are all the nations of the earth to come to an understanding of the true identity of the Lord Jesus Christ? Consider these prophecies:

• "The time shall come when the knowledge of a Savior shall spread

throughout every nation, kindred, tongue, and people" (Mosiah 3:20).

• "These last records [clearly referring to the Book of Mormon and other latter-day scriptures] . . . shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world; and that all men must come unto him, or they cannot be saved" (1 Nephi 13:40).

• "And righteousness will I send down out of heaven; and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men; and righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine elect from the four quarters of the earth" (Moses 7:62).

God's instrument to gather his elect

President Benson has plainly declared that "the Book of Mormon is the instrument that God designed to 'sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather [His] elect' " (in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, p. 3; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, p. 4). We have no more sacred privilege, and no more urgent and sacred responsibility, than to bear testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God! And we have no more effective instrument with which to accomplish this sacred task than the record which God has prepared for that very purpose, even the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ! In its pages, as in the other standard works of the Church, the true identity of the Lord Jesus Christ stands forever revealed—past, present, and future!

The Book of Mormon's witness of Jesus

Concert halls are filled at Christmas-time by people in many lands throughout the world who, with reverence and rejoicing, stand and sing the triumphant and

immortal words of Isaiah, set to the music of Handel's *Messiah*:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (JST, Isaiah 9:6).

But who is this child? Who is this son? And "whose son is he?" (Matthew 22:42). Who is this "mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace," spoken of by Isaiah? The Book of Mormon "verifies and clarifies" who he is! (Ezra Taft Benson, *A Witness and a Warning* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1988], p. 13).

He is Jesus Christ, born into this world as the Only Begotten Son of God the Eternal Father (see 2 Nephi 25:12; Jacob 4:5, 11; Alma 5:48; 9:26; 12:33-34; 13:5), and the Son of Mary "after the manner of the flesh" (1 Nephi 11:18-24; 2 Nephi 2:4, 8; 31:7; 32:6; Mosiah 3:8).

He is Jesus Christ, the long-awaited Messiah, the Savior and Redeemer of the world (see 1 Nephi 1:19; 10:4-17; 15:13-14; 2 Nephi 2:6-10), of whom all the prophets testified (see 3 Nephi 11:10; Mosiah 3:13; Helaman 8:13-23), who came into the world so "that salvation might come unto the children of men even through faith on his name" (Mosiah 3:9; see also 2 Nephi 31:2-21; Alma 32:21-43).

He is Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who was "judged of the world, . . . lifted up upon the cross" (1 Nephi 11:32-33), and crucified (see 1 Nephi 19:9-10, 13-15; 2 Nephi 6:9; 10:3-5; 25:12-13; Mosiah 3:9; 15:7-9) to "atone for the sins of the world" (Alma 34:8; see also Mosiah 3:11-18; Alma 22:14; 33:22-23).

He is Jesus Christ, who, before descending to come down from heaven to dwell among the children of men (see Mosiah 3:5), was none other than the Great Jehovah (see Moroni 10:34; D&C 110:3-4; Abraham 1:16; 2:6-8), the

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (see 1 Nephi 19:7-15; Mosiah 7:19-20; Helaman 8:13-23), the Holy One of Israel (see 2 Nephi 6:9), who gave the law unto Moses on the mount! (see 3 Nephi 15:5).

He is Jesus Christ, "the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning" (Mosiah 3:8; see also 2 Nephi 9:6; Alma 11:39; 3 Nephi 9:15; D&C 38:1-3; 76:24), whose infinite atonement (see 2 Nephi 2:6-10; 9:5-10; Alma 34:8-16; 36:17-18) brings the resurrection of the dead (see 2 Nephi 9:10-13, 21-22; Jacob 4:11-12; Alma 11:42-45; 40:23; Helaman 14:15-19).

He is Jesus Christ, "the Eternal Judge of both [the] quick and [the] dead" (Moroni 10:34; see also 2 Nephi 2:9-10; 9:13-17, 41; Mosiah 3:10, 18; 3 Nephi 27:13-15; 28:31; Mormon 3:20-22).

He is Jesus Christ, "the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity" (Mosiah 3:5).

"O ye my servants . . . , be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me, even Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the Living God, that I was, that I am, and that I am to come" (D&C 68:5-6).

I know and bear witness that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, that he was and is the Great Jehovah, the Savior and Redeemer of the world. I know that he atoned for the sins of the world and that he was resurrected with a glorious body of flesh and bone. I bear witness that he lives and that he soon will come again to rule and reign as "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords" (Revelation 19:16). May we truly "flood the earth with the Book of Mormon" (Ezra Taft Benson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, p. 4; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, p. 5), that all who will may come unto him and be saved, I pray in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder V. Dallas Merrell

I wish for each one of you to know of the profound love that I feel for you.

Dr. Bloom extols Joseph Smith

I am intrigued as knowledgeable people of the world comment on the influence and power of the Church.

I would like to share with you some observations of Harold Bloom, who is a Jewish religious scholar. Dr. Bloom is a distinguished professor at both New York and Yale universities.

Professor Bloom has written about the power and future of the Church, and he extols Joseph Smith as “an authentic religious genius, unique in our . . . history,” and praises “the sureness of his instincts, his uncanny *knowing* precisely what [was] needful for the inauguration of a new faith” (*The American Religion* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992], pp. 82–83).

Joseph Smith and Mormonism, he says, have contributed to the world “a more human God and a more divine man” (p. 100). Bloom says, “I also do not . . . doubt that Joseph Smith was an authentic prophet. Where in all American history can we find his match?” (p. 95). “Nothing else in all of American history strikes me as . . . equal to the early Mormons, to Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, Parley and Orson Pratt, and the men and women who were their followers and friends” (p. 79).

I am pleased to add my perspective to the impressive conclusions of Dr. Bloom. He wrote about how differently a believer might perceive Mormonism, and I am a believer. I am also one who has spent decades of academic and professional work researching and advising institutions on matters of leadership and power, and I wish to share with you my understanding about the *real* power of the Church. I invite each of you to think with me about several reasons why the true

character and power of this work transcends the genius of any man.

Sources of the Church’s real power

In the first place, the power of the Church is based on divine authority. God the Father and the Son appeared to Joseph Smith and directed the restoration of their Church. Jesus Christ has chosen and ordained those who hold exclusively the priesthood keys to unlock and direct God’s work. The power and authority of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles extend to Christ’s ordained work in all the world. He has appointed the Apostles and the Seventy to travel in all nations to build up and regulate the Church. The Lord also calls “standing ministers” (D&C 124:137) to stay and bless us where we are and has affirmed the validity of his ordained representatives: “Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:38). Those in authority have no question about whose work this is and for whom we labor.

Secondly, immense power comes from our divinely mandated purpose. The Church’s goal is not social standing, nor is it political or economic power. Our purpose is to invite all people to come unto Christ and be perfected in Him. Revealed gospel doctrines give us vision and perspective about God and His plan for our salvation. The Church is a divine instrument to help us qualify for eternal life, which is life with God. That is our sacred purpose, and it shapes everything about the Lord’s kingdom.

The power of the Church is also related to its essential work. Our work is to teach correct doctrine and principles of the gospel and to provide all humankind with saving ordinances so that they will receive “all that [the] Father hath” (D&C 84:38). President Howard W. Hunter has declared that the Church “has a compre-

hensive and inclusive message . . . restored to meet the needs of all mankind" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1991, p. 23; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1991, pp. 18–19). Indeed, the Church is establishing an expansive family that includes every race, creed, tongue, and gender, the poor and needy, sinners and saints, the living and the dead in the merciful, just, and fair operations of God's plan for all of His children.

We are empowered by faithful Latter-day Saints who are disciples of Jesus Christ, not just members of the Church. The power of the Church is based profoundly on discipleship that is rooted in individual faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Our faith is demonstrated at the waters of baptism, by worthily partaking of the sacrament, in temple worship, and in the integrity of our daily lives. True disciples seal their faith in service that is motivated by love for the Savior and for the people of the earth.

The strength of the Church is also rooted in obedience to the principle of stewardship. We acknowledge that all we possess belongs to God. We and all brothers and sisters who preceded us come as one, in common, to bring our offerings of tithes, time, and talents for building the kingdom of God. We strive to lift one another as neighbors and to establish ourselves as a covenant community whose lives are centered in Christ.

Finally, the source of the Church's power involves continuous improvement. Our most fundamental doctrines impel us to improve, individually and collectively. We counsel one with another. We pray together and in secret. We acknowledge our weaknesses, search scriptures, and ponder course adjustments. We receive the righteous benefits from heavenly inspired gifts of science, technology, and art. We correlate, correct, and realign, bringing all truth we are capable of receiving to harmonize our lives and the leadership and organization of this work with the teachings and perfect example of our leader, Jesus Christ.

The only organization that will not fail

Some, as Dr. Bloom suggests, might have a "healthy fear" of the future power of the Mormons (*The American Religion*, p. 86). To them we answer humbly, This is the ongoing work of the Almighty. This is not the church of Joseph Smith. It is the Church of Jesus Christ. It is the only organization in all the world that will not fail. We are witnessing today the fulfillment of the words of the prophet Daniel: The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall fill the whole earth and shall stand forever (see Daniel 2:29–45).

Heber C. Kimball's optimism

Professor Bloom complimented the patience of our Church leaders. Patience is born of justified optimism. Elder Heber C. Kimball, an early Apostle, provides an impressive illustration. He returned from a mission to England in 1838 to find that half of the members in Kirtland, Ohio, had left the Church. The Prophet Joseph Smith and several key leaders were imprisoned for five months. Five of the Apostles and two of the Three Witnesses had apostatized. Thousands of the Saints in Missouri were being mobbed and driven from their torched homes. Entering this bleak situation, Elder Kimball wrote: "I can truly say that I have never seen the Church in a better state since I have been a member of it. What there [is] left are firm and steadfast, full of love and good works. They have lost all their earthly goods, and are now ready to go and preach the Gospel to a dying world!" (in Orson F. Whitney, *The Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 3rd ed. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967], p. 246).

Joseph Smith's optimism

At that same time, Joseph Smith penned these inspiring words from Liberty Jail: "What power shall stay the heavens? As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri river in

its decreed course, or to turn it up stream, as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints" (D&C 121:33).

With grand optimism the Prophet Joseph wrote to the editor of the *Chicago Democrat*: "No unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done" (*History of the Church*, 4:540).

The divine character of the Church

We rejoice that the future belongs to our Master, who created this world, provided the plan of salvation, and established this Church. He himself declared, "For I, the Lord, have put forth my hand to exert the powers of heaven; ye cannot see it now, yet a little while and ye shall

see it, and know that I am, and that I will come and reign with my people" (D&C 84:119).

No other institution has the divine character as does The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. That is because it has true authority, revealed purpose, a divine work, committed disciples, a vision of our stewardship, and impelling principles of eternal progress. To these things I humbly and gratefully testify in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

We have listened to Elders John M. Madsen and V. Dallas Merrell of the Seventy.

The congregation and the choir will now join in singing "High on the Mountain Top." Elder David E. Sorensen, who also was called as a Seventy since last April, will then speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "High on the Mountain Top."

Elder David E. Sorensen

When our oldest children were still small, we lived on a busy street here in Salt Lake City. My wife, Verla, and I were concerned about the danger that street presented to our children. We used every opportunity to reinforce the importance of staying away from the street. In addition, this was a time in our children's lives when they were learning about temples and eternal families. So our children's prayers regularly included this request: "Please help us to be married in the temple and stay out of the street."

One day after some of our neighbor's children had gone home after playing at our house, my wife received a call from their mother. One of her children had heard a prayer while he was visiting

us and had offered this variation when he said his own prayer at home: "Please help us stay out of the temple and get married in the street."

I trust that that particular prayer was not received exactly the way it was phrased, but I do have a strong testimony of the importance of prayer in shaping our lives.

The Savior's teachings about prayer

The Savior puts great emphasis on prayer in the Book of Mormon. He repeatedly and personally prayed with and for the Nephites. And after He did this, He asked them to follow His example:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye must watch and pray always, lest ye be tempted by the devil, and ye be led away captive by him.

"And as I have prayed among you even so shall ye pray in my church, among my people who do repent and are baptized in my name. Behold I am the light; I have set an example for you" (3 Nephi 18:15-16; see also 3 Nephi 18:24; 19:17-34; 27:21).

In fact, Christ specifically exhorts the Nephites at least ten times to "pray unto the Father in [his] name" (3 Nephi 18:19; see also 3 Nephi 13:6-9; 14:11; 17:3; 18:20-21, 23; 20:31; 21:27; 27:2-7, 9, 28).

Christ taught that prayer is indispensable at each step of the perfection process, but especially at the very beginning. For example, He taught that one of the key reasons for the restoration of the gospel was so scattered Israel could pray to the Father in the name of Christ:

"Yea, the work shall commence among all the dispersed of my people, with the Father to prepare the way whereby they may come unto me, that *they may call on the Father in my name*" (3 Nephi 21:27; italics added).

Furthermore, He taught that we in the Church are to pray on behalf of those who are investigating the Church (see 3 Nephi 18:23-30). He encouraged those who had heard His words to ponder them and to pray to the Father in His name for increased understanding (see 3 Nephi 17:3). And, of course, He showed us that even perfected people, such as Himself, should pray constantly.

At each level of our progression toward becoming like our Heavenly Father, prayer is a necessary step. Once we have tasted of His goodness, Christ encourages us to pray often—in secret, in our families, in our churches, and in our hearts, continually asking specifically for the things which we need—telling us, "And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you" (3 Nephi 18:20).

The key to salvation

Christ taught the Nephites that prayer is more than just a means to receive our Father in Heaven's generosity; rather, prayer itself is an act of faith as well as an act of righteousness. Prayer is the defining act of the worshiper of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. This is because the act of prayer itself can change and purify us, both individually and as a group. As our Bible Dictionary states, "The object of prayer is not to change the will of God, but to secure for ourselves and for others blessings that God is already willing to grant, but that are made conditional on our asking for them" (p. 753).

In other words, prayers bring our desires and the desires of our Father into harmony, thus bringing us both the blessing we are seeking and also the blessing of greater unity with the Father. This practice is key to the collective and individual salvation of women and men.

Elder Hyrum M. Smith expressed this idea well when he wrote, "The prayer of faith is the secret of the strength of the Church" (Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, *The Doctrine and Covenants Commentary*, rev. ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972], p. 194).

Prayers during son's illness

I have seen this verified in my own life. While we were living in California, one of our sons was seriously injured in an automobile accident. His skull was badly fractured, and doctors gave us very little encouragement that he would survive. Three days after he was admitted to the hospital, he contracted meningitis, and his condition worsened. Our family doctor and neighbor came to our home and said, "All we can do now is pray."

And pray we did. For several weeks our neighbors, friends, and business associates joined us in praying for our son and for our own strength. After almost a month, our son's condition finally stabi-

lized and then improved, and we were blessed to see him eventually recovered and smiling again.

I would not wish a similar experience on anyone, but that terrible, difficult period taught us the principle that President Thomas S. Monson has taught the Church. Said he, "Prayer is the passport to spiritual power" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, p. 61; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, p. 47). During our son's illness, we saw and felt the spiritual power of prayer! Our ward had never prayed harder than it did then, and I don't think the members had ever been closer to each other. Our family was sustained by the collective faith and prayers of our friends. And even as our hearts were breaking in fear that we might lose our son, we felt closer to our Heavenly Father and more aware of our dependency on Him than at almost any other time in our lives.

Prayer changes our souls

While the blessings we ask for and receive through prayer are undeniably magnificent, the greatest blessing and benefit is not the physical or spiritual blessings that may come as answers to our prayers but the changes to our soul that come as we learn to depend on our Heavenly Father for strength.

One mother told the following experience that helps to explain this idea. She said, "Sometimes while we are eating, one of my children will get my attention and signal to me while his mouth is full of food. Grunting and waving, he will try to motion for me to do something for him. I know perfectly well that what he wants is for me to pour him a glass of milk, but I will wait until he uses words to ask me before I will do it. It's not that I can't understand what he wants but that I feel it is important for him to learn how to communicate well."

In much the same way that parents tutor their children in communication and courtesy, I believe that our Heavenly Father teaches us to pray because the very

act of praying will improve us. We worship our Father in Heaven as all-knowing and all-powerful. Surely, as our Creator, He knows our cares, our worries, our joys, our struggles without our informing Him. The reason our Heavenly Father asks us to pray cannot be that we are able to tell Him something He does not already know. Rather, the reason He asks us to pray is that the process of learning to communicate effectively with Him will shape and change our lives as much as we are changed by learning to communicate as children.

President Gordon B. Hinckley teaches it this way:

"There is something in the very posture of kneeling that contradicts the attitudes described by Paul: 'proud . . . heady, highminded.' . . .

"There is something in the act of addressing Deity that offsets a tendency toward blasphemy and toward becoming lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

"The inclination to be unholy, as Paul described it, to be unthankful, is erased as together family members thank the Lord for life and peace and all they have" ("The Blessings of Family Prayer," *Ensign*, Feb. 1991, p. 4).

Aside from participating in the ordinances of the gospel, there is no other time in our lives when we can renew our spiritual life and improve our understanding of our place before Heavenly Father the way we can when we pray. As we humble ourselves to approach our God and thoughtfully consider His grace and great love for us, we will become a more holy and reverent people, more able to receive the blessings He will willingly pour out on us. Truly, the prayer of faith is the secret of the strength of the Church.

I testify that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, that Joseph Smith was the prophet of the Restoration. Ezra Taft Benson is our prophet. The Book of Mormon's gold plates are a reality, as were the appearances of Moroni and many other angels who instructed the Prophet

Joseph Smith in response to his prayers. The restoration of the priesthood is real and eternal. It is the binding force for such divine ordinances as baptisms and sealings as administered by the Church today. The First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles are prophets, seers, and revelators. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder David E. Sorensen of the Seventy.

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now speak to us.

Elder Richard G. Scott

Our great missionary program

For a few hours nearly every week I have an experience that leaves me profoundly touched with gratitude, awe, and confidence in the future. As a step in the pattern used by the First Presidency to call, through inspiration, full-time missionaries, each week some of the Twelve review from five hundred to eight hundred recommendations from all over the world. Each call and assignment is made by the Spirit through the Lord's Apostles. Each candidate's history is a vignette of sacrifice, devotion, testimony, and faith.

Some who do not understand our spiritual roots are baffled by our missionary program. They cannot believe young women are willing to devote one and one-half years and young men two years to teach religious principles under a rigorous daily schedule with the highest standards of personal discipline while forgoing dating and all other private interests. Nor can they fathom why such youth work to finance their missions, at times with the help of family or friends, when they cannot choose where or with whom they will serve.

Such youth are joined by couples who leave comfortable homes, grandchildren, and recreation, often multiple times, for distant parts of the world to live under the most humble circumstances. A few learn a foreign language; many experience vastly different cultures, accepting challenges they are not sure they can cope

with. Yet these youth and couples return from service given at great personal sacrifice, thanking the Lord for the privilege. There is nothing like it in the world.

The power of correct principles

What creates this valiant force of over 48,000 missionaries voluntarily serving others? Whence cometh their strength? The answer lies in the *power of correct principles*. I will explain.

Man has always benefited from obedience to true principles. The fearless Polynesians in precarious craft crossed an immense ocean for destinations thousands of miles away. That feat was accomplished not by chance but by adherence to sound principles of celestial navigation. They prepared carefully and did not succumb to temptations to deviate from their course or delay en route. In like manner, you and I can be assured of reaching worthy objectives in life by understanding and consistently following correct principles rooted in revealed truth.

Principles are anchors of safety. They are like the steel anchors a mountaineer uses to conquer otherwise impossible cliffs. They will help you have confidence in new and unfamiliar circumstances. They will provide you protection in life's storms of adversity.

All of the self-inflicted tragedy that occurs today from violation of the Lord's commandments could be avoided by careful, consistent observance of revealed

truth. The productive power of correct principles can make your life a joyous, satisfying experience.

Mothers' nurturing influence

We can understand what motivates missionaries to sacrifice to serve others by examining their early youth. Proverbs records this principle: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

When, as mothers, you are consistently in the home, at least during the hours the children are predominantly there, you can detect the individual needs of each child and provide ways to satisfy them. Your divinely given instincts help sense a child's special talents and unique capacities so you can nurture and strengthen them. Consider these examples of how the compassionate love and sensitivity of parents, particularly mothers, bless children's lives:

A mother overheard her son, four, tell his brother, six, "I don't believe in Jesus." The brother responded, "You have really hurt my feelings." Sensing a need, the mother reinforced the younger boy's understanding of the Savior. She placed a picture of the Redeemer in his room and continued to teach all of her children more about the Master. Sometime later, the younger son commented, "Mom, you're my best friend—next to Jesus."

Another lovely mother has consistently read scriptures to her children to teach them truth. While overseas with no satisfactory schools, she spent much time and energy painstakingly tutoring them—with amazing results. Once the father went to help their five-year-old daughter with evening prayer. He found her kneeling, sharing her tender feelings with her Heavenly Father. Sensing his presence, she looked up. He said, "Do you know how wonderful it makes Father in Heaven feel when you talk to Him?" She responded, "Oh, Daddy, I will always talk to my Father in Heaven." Such is the pure

heart of a five-year-old who has been carefully, spiritually nurtured.

Another mother read gospel stories to her children from a young, formative age. Once, as she read of the crucifixion of the Savior, her two-and-one-half-year-old son sobbed. She realized that he was a spiritually sensitive child. Through the years that child has become a righteous, disciplined young man who loves the Lord and keeps His commandments. Profanity, so prevalent today, is particularly offensive to him. As he shuns it and other evils, he is criticized for being too "churchy." While it is difficult now, as he continues his resolve to be righteous, he will become a powerfully strong husband, father, and leader.

When two-year-old Clayton overheard the family sharing feelings about his grandmother serving in Swaziland, Africa, his little heart was touched. Often he would fold his arms, bow his head, and say, "Gam-ma on mission. Jesus. Amen." When she returned, he did not recognize her until she said, "This is your missionary grandma." Instantly he broke into a smile, ran, and threw his arms around her. Each grandchild now wants to be a missionary.

Honor to mothers who remain home

What enduring fruits will result from seeds of truth you carefully plant and thoughtfully cultivate in the fertile soil of your child's trusting mind and heart? Recently I reviewed the history of many missionaries and found a powerful correlation between exceptional missionaries and mothers who chose to remain home, often at great financial and personal sacrifice. With the names changed, I share excerpts of bishops' and stake presidents' comments about real missionaries. It is but a fraction of the many thousands of examples available. They reflect honor to mothers who sacrificed to remain home for their children's benefit.

"Kevin is one of the finest young men I have known. He is a natural leader,

gifted, intelligent, and multitalented, with whom people feel comfortable. He has read the Book of Mormon six times and has a strong testimony acquired through study, service, trial, and sacrifice. He currently has a full scholarship to medical school."

"Loraine is one of the most remarkable young women in the Church. She will be a delight to any mission president."

"Roy is the type of young man I would hope for my daughter someday."

"Brad is one of the finest young men I have ever known. He is honest and true, bright, well organized, and a hard worker. He handles challenges as if the Lord were speaking in his ear."

"Carol has kept herself worthy while a cheerleader in high school and college. She is one of the most loved and looked-up-to among her peers. She is strong, and her love for the Lord is evidenced in her '1,000-watt' glow."

"Pierre comes from a strong family. He is not swayed by peer pressure, has always been a leader, prays regularly, studies the scriptures, is close to family and the principles of the gospel. He does the uncomfortable things first."

"Mark is possibly the best-prepared young man I have ever recommended. He has taken many under his arm and stabilized their lives because of his testimony and love. One of eleven children, he indicated he would be fasting and praying during the week his mission is being considered."

"Marie is strong, motivated, smart, dedicated, and knows where she is going. She comes from a strong home where gospel-centered ideals and values were successfully transferred to her. During her entire life she has been an outstanding example of service and righteous living."

"Dale has a strong foundation in the gospel from his own study and the influence of a very supportive family. The eldest of five children, he has always done the right things. He had a driver's license,

but when insurance rates increased, he voluntarily turned it in."

"Rodney is a very impressive young man. He spent a short time in the military and got his whole platoon to pray with him before tests; several went to church with him."

"Sonya is almost too good to be true!"

"Mac is on athletic scholarship and is close to attaining his goal of representing his country in the Olympics this fall, yet he has decided it's time to serve his mission."

"Marco is a pure vessel, not demonstrative but steady. One of eight, he recently earned his Eagle rank, delayed not by apathy but because he has worked hard since thirteen to help support his large family."

"Layne is a gentle giant, predisposed to set a good example. A fine student, he delayed higher education to earn money for his mission. He sold the horses he loves to help with family finances."

"Lee is completely dependable and responsible. To illustrate his faith, his mother at this moment is hovering between life and death, yet he is anxious to serve. He said, 'That is what the Lord wants and my parents want.'"

There are many thousands of youth like those I have just described, and more just keep coming.

How grateful you mothers of youth like these must feel as you see some of the fruits of your sacrifice. You have a vision of the power of obediently, patiently teaching truth because you look beyond the peanut butter sandwiches, soiled clothing, tedious hours of routine, struggles with homework, and long hours by a sickbed.

President Benson has taught that a mother with children should be in the home. He also said, "We realize . . . that some of our choice sisters are widowed and divorced and that others find themselves in unusual circumstances where, out of necessity, they are required to work

for a period of time. But these instances are the exception, not the rule" (Ezra Taft Benson, *To the Mothers in Zion* [pamphlet, 1987], pp. 5–6). You in these unusual circumstances qualify for additional inspiration and strength from the Lord. Those who leave the home for lesser reasons will not.

Dealing with disobedience

Parents, don't make the mistake of purposefully intervening to soften or eliminate the natural consequences of your child's deliberate decisions to violate the commandments. Such acts reinforce false principles, open the door for more serious sin, and lessen the likelihood of repentance.

Some of you have children who do not respond to you, choosing entirely different paths. Father in Heaven has repeatedly had that same experience. While some of His children have used His gift of agency to make choices against His counsel, He continues to love them. Yet, I am sure, He has never blamed Himself for their unwise choices.

Focus on the family

As a mother or father, are you in trouble because the pressures of the world lead you from effectively fulfilling your divine role? Is your life unconsciously fueled with the burning desire for more things that could compromise eternal relationships and the molding of a child's developing character? You must be willing to forgo personal pleasure and self-interest for family-centered activity, and not turn over to church, school, or society the principal role of fostering a child's well-rounded development. It takes time, great effort, and significant personal sacrifice to "train up a child in the way he should go." But where can you find greater rewards for a job well done?

You may not have the blessing of being raised in an understanding family, yet your use of correct principles will

mold, strengthen, and give purpose to your lives.

Find and follow correct principles

Joseph Smith's inspired statement, "I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves," still applies (quoted by John Taylor, in *Millennial Star*, 15 Nov. 1851, p. 339). The Lord uses that pattern with us. You will find correct principles in the teachings of the Savior, His prophets, and the scriptures—especially the Book of Mormon.

While easy to find, true principles are not easy to live until they become an established pattern of life. They will require you to dislodge false ideas. They can cause you wrenching battles within the secret chambers of your heart and decisive encounters to overcome temptation, peer pressure, and the false allure of the "easy way out." Yet as you resolutely follow correct principles, you will forge strength of character available to you in times of urgent need. Your consistent adherence to principle overcomes the alluring yet false lifestyles that surround you. Your faithful compliance to correct principles will generate criticism and ridicule from others, yet the results are so eternally worthwhile that they warrant your every sacrifice.

Anchor your life in Christ

Now, the most important principle I can share: Anchor your life in Jesus Christ, your Redeemer. Make your Eternal Father and His Beloved Son the most important priority in your life—more important than life itself, more important than a beloved companion or children or anyone on earth. Make their will your central desire. Then all that you need for happiness will come to you.

I solemnly testify that your Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son live, that they know you, that they love you, that they want to help you. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

Elder James E. Faust, also of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will be our concluding speaker for this session.

Elder James E. Faust

Strengthening the family

At this Easter season I extend to all who are participating in these services my warmest greetings and prayers for your happiness and well-being. On this day we remember that the risen Lord has charged us with the responsibility to build the kingdom of God on earth. With this charge in mind, I hope to add a few thoughts that may strengthen the most important of all institutions—the family.

In recent times, society has been plagued with a cancer from which few families have escaped. I speak of the disintegration of our homes. Immediate corrective treatment is urgent. In what I have to say, I do not wish to offend anyone. I affirm my profound belief that God's greatest creation is womanhood. I also believe that there is no greater good in all the world than motherhood. The influence of a mother in the lives of her children is beyond calculation. Single parents, most of whom are mothers, perform an especially heroic service.

Importance of caring fathers

I hasten to acknowledge that there are too many husbands and fathers who are abusive to their wives and children and from whom the wives and children need protection. Yet modern sociological studies powerfully reaffirm the essential influence of a caring father in the life of a child—boy or girl. In the past twenty years, as homes and families have struggled to stay intact, sociological studies reveal this alarming fact: much of the crime and many of the behavioral disorders in the United States come from homes where the father has abandoned the chil-

dren. In many societies the world over, child poverty, crime, drug abuse, and family decay can be traced to conditions where the father gives no male nurturing. Sociologically it is now painfully apparent that fathers are not optional family baggage.

We need to honor the position of the father as the primary provider for physical and spiritual support. I state this with no reluctance because the Lord has revealed that this obligation is placed upon husbands. "Women have claim on their husbands for their maintenance, until their husbands are taken" (D&C 83:2). Further, "All children have claim upon their parents for their maintenance until they are of age" (D&C 83:4). In addition, their spiritual welfare should be "brought to pass by the faith and covenant of their fathers" (D&C 84:99). As regards little children, the Lord has promised that "great things may be required at the hands of their fathers" (D&C 29:48).

Both parents are important

It is useless to debate which parent is most important. No one would doubt that a mother's influence is paramount with newborns and in the first years of a child's life. The father's influence increases as the child grows older. However, each parent is necessary at various times in a child's development. Both fathers and mothers do many intrinsically different things for their children. Both mothers and fathers are equipped to nurture children, but their approaches are different. Mothers seem to take a dominant role in preparing children to live within their families, present and future. Fathers seem best equipped to prepare children to

function in the environment outside the family.

One authority states: "Studies show that fathers have a special role to play in building a child's self-respect. They are important, too, in ways we really don't understand, in developing internal limits and controls in children." He continues: "Research also shows that fathers are critical in establishment of gender in children. Interestingly, fatherly involvement produces stronger sexual identity and character in both boys and girls. It is well established that the masculinity of sons and the femininity of daughters are each greater when fathers are active in family life" (Karl Zinsmeister, "Do Children Need Fathers?" *Crisis*, Oct. 1992).

Parents in any marital situation have a duty to set aside personal differences and encourage each other's righteous influence in the lives of their children.

The status of women

Is it not possible to give to woman-kind all the rights and blessings that come from God and legal authority without diminishing the nobility of God's other grand creation, manhood? Eliza R. Snow stated in 1872:

"The status of women is one of the questions of the day. Socially and politically it forces itself upon the attention of the world. Some . . . refuse to concede that woman is entitled to the enjoyment of any rights other than . . . the whims, fancies or justice . . . men may choose to grant her. The reasons which they cannot meet with argument they decry and ridicule; an old refuge for those opposed to correct principles which they are unable to controvert. Others . . . not only recognize that woman's status should be improved, but are so radical in their extreme theories that they would set her in antagonism to man, assume for her a separate and opposing existence; and . . . show how entirely independent she should be." Indeed, she continued, they "would make her adopt the more reprehensible phases of character

which men present, and which should be shunned or improved by them instead of being copied by women. These are the two extremes, and between them is the 'golden mean' " ("Woman's Status," *The Woman's Exponent*, 15 July 1872, p. 29).

The priesthood: guiding authority

Many people do not understand our belief that God has wisely established a guiding authority for the most important institutions in the world. This guiding authority is called the priesthood. The priesthood is held in trust to be used to bless all of God's children. Priesthood is not gender; it is blessings from God for all at the hands of the servants He has designated. Within the Church this authority of the priesthood can bless all members through the ministration of home teachers, quorum presidents, bishops, fathers, and all other righteous brethren who are charged with the administration of the affairs of the kingdom of God. Priesthood is the righteous power and influence by which boys are taught in their youth and throughout their lives to honor chastity, to be honest and industrious, and to develop respect for, and stand in the defense of, womanhood. Priesthood is a restraining influence. Girls are taught that through its influence and power to bless, they can fulfill many of their desires.

Holding the priesthood means following the example of Christ and seeking to emulate his example of fatherhood. It means constant concern and caring for one's own flesh and blood. The man who holds the priesthood is to honor it by eternally cherishing, with absolute fidelity, his wife and the mother of his children. He is to extend lifelong care and concern for his children, and their children. The plea of David for his rebel son is one of the most moving in all of the scriptures, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (2 Samuel 18:33).

Marriage is the first priority

I urge each husband and father of this Church to be the kind of a man your wife would not want to be without. I urge the sisters of this Church to be patient, loving, and understanding with their husbands. Those who enter into marriage should be fully prepared to establish their marriage as the first priority in their lives.

It is destructive to the feeling essential for a happy marriage for either party to say to the other marriage partner, "I don't need you." This is particularly so because the counsel of the Savior was and is to become one flesh: "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh" (Matthew 19:5-6).

It is far more difficult to be of one heart and mind than to be physically one. This unity of heart and mind is manifest in sincere expressions of "I appreciate you" and "I am proud of you." Such domestic harmony results from forgiving and forgetting, essential elements of a maturing marriage relationship. Someone has said that we should keep our eyes wide open before marriage and half shut afterward (Magdeleine de Scudéry, in John P. Bradley, et al., comp., *The International Dictionary of Thoughts* [Chicago: J. G. Ferguson Publishing Co., 1969], p. 472). True charity ought to begin in marriage, for it is a relationship that must be rebuilt every day.

I wonder if it is possible for one marriage partner to jettison the other and become completely whole. Either partner who diminishes the divine role of the other in the presence of the children demeans the budding femininity within the daughters and the emerging manhood of the sons. I suppose there are always some honest differences between husband and wife, but let them be settled in private.

Covenants between men and women

The importance of this subject emboldens me to say a word about covenant

breaking. It must be recognized that some marriages just fail. To those in that circumstance, I extend understanding because every divorce carries heartache with it. I hope what I say will not be disturbing. In my opinion, any promise between a man and a woman incident to a marriage ceremony rises to the dignity of a covenant. The family relationship of father, mother, and child is the oldest and most enduring institution in the world. It has survived vast differences of geography and culture. This is because marriage between man and woman is a natural state and is ordained of God. It is a moral imperative. Those marriages performed in our temples, meant to be eternal relationships, then, become the most sacred covenants we can make. The sealing power given by God through Elijah is thus invoked, and God becomes a party to the promises.

"Just cause" for breaking covenants

What, then, might be "just cause" for breaking the covenants of marriage? Over a lifetime of dealing with human problems, I have struggled to understand what might be considered "just cause" for breaking of covenants. I confess I do not claim the wisdom or authority to definitively state what is "just cause." Only the parties to the marriage can determine this. They must bear the responsibility for the train of consequences which inevitably follows if these covenants are not honored. In my opinion, "just cause" should be nothing less serious than a prolonged and apparently irredeemable relationship which is destructive of a person's dignity as a human being.

At the same time, I have strong feelings about what is not provocation for breaking the sacred covenants of marriage. Surely it is not simply "mental distress" or "personality differences" or having "grown apart" or having "fallen out of love." This is especially so where there are children. Enduring divine counsel comes from Paul:

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).

"That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, [and] to love their children" (Titus 2:4).

Cure for decaying family life

In my opinion, members of the Church have the most effective cure for our decaying family life. It is for men, women, and children to honor and respect the divine roles of both fathers and mothers in the home. In so doing, mutual respect and appreciation among the members of the Church will be fostered by the righteousness found there. In this way the great sealing keys restored by Elijah, spoken of by Malachi, might operate "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse" (D&C 110:15; see also Malachi 4:6).

The sealing power in our daily lives

President Joseph Fielding Smith stated concerning the keys of Elijah: "This sealing power bestowed upon Elijah, is the power which binds husbands and wives, and children to parents for time and eternity. It is the binding power existing in every Gospel ordinance. . . . It was the mission of Elijah to come, and restore it so that the curse of confusion and disorder would not exist in the kingdom of God" (*Elijah the Prophet and His Mission* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957], p. 5). Confusion and disorder are all too common in society, but they must not be permitted to destroy our homes.

Perhaps we regard the power bestowed by Elijah as something associated only with formal ordinances performed in sacred places. But these ordinances become dynamic and productive of good only as they reveal themselves in our daily lives. Malachi said that the power of Elijah would turn the *hearts* of the fathers

and the children to each other. The heart is the seat of the emotions and a conduit for revelation (see Malachi 4:5-6). This sealing power thus reveals itself in family relationships, in attributes and virtues developed in a nurturing environment, and in loving service. These are the cords that bind families together, and the priesthood advances their development. In imperceptible but real ways, the "doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul [and thy home] as the dews from heaven" (D&C 121:45).

"Fathers, come home"

I so testify that the blessings of the priesthood, honored by fathers and husbands and revered by wives and children, can indeed cure the cancer that plagues our society. I plead with you, Fathers, come home. Magnify your priesthood calling; bless your families through this sacred influence, and experience the rewards promised by our Father and God. I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Faust.

We remind the brethren of the general priesthood meeting which will convene in the Tabernacle this evening at 6:00 P.M. mountain standard time. We emphasize that's mountain standard time because tomorrow we'll be on mountain daylight saving time. And therefore it's very important that before you retire tonight you turn your clocks ahead one hour so you'll be here on time tomorrow.

The nationwide CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:30 to 10:00 A.M. daylight saving time. Those desiring to attend this broadcast and the Sunday morning session which immediately follows must be in their seats no later than 9:15 in the morning.

We express gratitude to the single-adult choir from the Ephraim, Logan, Ogden, Orem, and Salt Lake institutes

for the beautiful music we have heard this afternoon.

And we repeat our expressions of appreciation to those who own and operate the many facilities of radio broadcasting, television broadcasting, cable broadcasting, and other means which have carried the proceedings of this general conference far and wide across the world. We note that we now have, as a part of this undertaking, more than 3,500 other halls connected by satellite into which the proceedings of this conference are being carried. It has become a mammoth and tremendous thing, the general conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

May I express appreciation for these beautiful flowers which are in the Tabernacle here on Temple Square. They are the gift of the Saints from the island of

Kauai in Hawaii. A few months ago that island was terribly devastated by Hurricane Iniki. These flowers have grown from the plants that were destroyed at that time and have been sent to us by air as an expression of gratitude to our Father in Heaven for his hand in restoring that which was lost, and as an expression of love on the part of those who are there in behalf of those of us who are here.

The choir will now sing in closing "Where Can I Turn for Peace?" Following the singing, the benediction will be offered by Elder Rulon G. Craven of the Seventy.

The choir sang "Where Can I Turn for Peace?"

Elder Rulon G. Craven offered the benediction.

GENERAL PRIESTHOOD SESSION

The general priesthood session, the third session of the 163rd Annual General Conference, convened in the Tabernacle at 6:00 P.M. on Saturday, April 3, 1993. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

Music was provided by a priesthood choir from Ricks College. Clyde Luke and Kevin Brower directed the choir, and Clay Christiansen was at the organ.

President Monson opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Thomas S. Monson

Brethren, we welcome you this evening to this general priesthood session of the conference.

President Ezra Taft Benson, who is watching these proceedings in his apartment, sends his love and best wishes to all who are participating in this session and has asked that I, Brother Monson, conduct. Elder Clinton L. Cutler is also

excused this evening, and he too is watching these proceedings on television.

The services are being relayed by closed-circuit and satellite transmission to holders of the priesthood gathered in the Assembly Hall, the BYU Marriott Center, and locations in many countries throughout the world.

We note that Elders Dallin H. Oaks, Horacio A. Tenorio, and Kenneth Johnson are seated on the stand in the Assembly Hall, and that Elders W. Eugene Hansen and Graham W. Doxey are seated on the stand in the BYU Marriott Center.

For the information of those in outlying areas, we announce that at the session this afternoon Elders F. Melvin Hammond, Kenneth Johnson, and Lynn A. Mickelsen, who had been serving as members of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, and Elders Neil Linden Andersen and David Todd Christofferson were called as new members of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The singing during this session will be furnished by a priesthood choir from Ricks College under the direction of Brothers Clyde Luke and Kevin Brower, with Brother Clay Christiansen at the organ.

We shall begin with the choir singing "See the Mighty Angel Flying," following which Elder L. Aldin Porter of the Presidency of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "See the Mighty Angel Flying."

Elder L. Aldin Porter of the Presidency of the Seventy offered the invocation.

President Monson

The choir will now favor us with "Sweet Hour of Prayer." Following the choir number, Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve will speak to us.

The choir sang "Sweet Hour of Prayer."

Elder Russell M. Nelson

Honoring the priesthood

Brethren, relatively little is written on my subject.¹ Yet we are all expected to know about it. I speak of honoring the priesthood.

This is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He who stands at the head of His restored Church so ordered His priesthood "that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world" (D&C 1:20). Remarkable! He chose to honor us with His priesthood. So we honor Him by honoring His priesthood—both its power and those who bear it. By so doing, men, women, and children throughout the world will be blessed. Honoring the priesthood fosters respect, respect promotes reverence, and reverence invites revelation.²

President Ezra Taft Benson has specifically asked us to follow proper priesthood protocol—principles, he noted, "that many of us have learned by observation while listening to senior brethren." He said, "Protocol is a long-established practice prescribing complete deference to . . . an order of correct procedure."³ I will quote from President Benson and other leaders because, as you will

note, much of my message pertains to that protocol.

Types of organizations

Differences exist in practice and organization between the Lord's Church and man-made institutions. Men and women may form associations for and among themselves and be governed by stipulations that are mutually acceptable. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, however, is neither a democracy nor a republic. His is a kingdom—the kingdom of God on earth. His is a hierarchical church, with ultimate authority at the top. The Lord directs His anointed servants. They testify to all the world that God has again spoken. The heavens have been opened. A living linkage has been formed between heaven and earth in our day.

That supreme authority is supported by a firm foundation following an organizational pattern established anciently. Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone, with Apostles and prophets and all the gifts, powers, and blessings that characterized the Church in earlier days (see 1 Corinthians 12:28).

Leaders and titles

Secular and spiritual institutions have differing patterns of leadership. Man-made organizations are governed by officers with titles that designate rank or accomplishment. A military officer, judge, senator, doctor, or professor is properly addressed by title. We appropriately honor individuals who have attained such positions.

In contrast, the kingdom of God is governed by the authority of the priesthood. It is not conferred for honor, but for a ministry of service. Priesthood titles are not created by man; neither are they for adornment, nor do they express mastery. They denote appointment to service in the work of the Lord. We are called, sustained, and ordained—not by ourselves but “by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof” (Articles of Faith 1:5; see also Hebrews 5:4).

Titles pertaining to the holy priesthood deserve our utmost care and respect. Each member of the First Presidency is addressed and spoken of as “President” (see D&C 107:22). The title *President* is also used when referring to the presidency of a stake or mission, and in reference to a quorum or branch president. The title *Apostle* is sacred. It has been given of God and belongs only to those who have been called and ordained as “special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world” (D&C 107:23). An Apostle speaks in the name of Him whose special witness he is. This hallowed title is not used in ordinary forms of address. The preferred title for one of the Twelve is *Elder* or *Brother*.

The title *bishop* is also expressive of presidency; the bishop is the president of the Aaronic Priesthood in his ward and the presiding high priest of the ward organization. Reverently we refer to him as “the bishop.”

Elder is a sacred title shared by all who bear the Melchizedek Priesthood.

General counsel

May I offer counsel of a general nature, first with comments about General Authorities. We recognize them as instruments in the hand of the Lord, yet realize that they are ordinary human beings. They require haircuts, laundry services, and occasional reminders just like anyone else. President Benson once shared with us a story to illustrate this. He said:

“Orson F. Whitney . . . was a great man to concentrate. One day when he was traveling by train, he was so preoccupied that he did not notice the train pass the station where he was to get off. So he had to [be driven] back to where he should have been. Meanwhile the stake president waited and waited. . . . Finally when he decided that something had more than likely happened to Brother Whitney and he was not going to make it, they commenced the meeting. As Elder Whitney approached, he was greeted by the opening hymn, which was ‘Ye Simple Souls Who Stray.’”⁴

We honor such a man because of his extraordinary calling. His official acts are valid on earth and in heaven. Well do I remember the first time I met one of the General Authorities. It was a feeling beyond description. Though I was but a boy, immediately—almost instinctively—I rose to my feet. Even now I feel that same way when one of the Brethren enters the room. A General Authority is an oracle of God.

Often we speak of *keys* of priesthood authority. Fifteen living men—the First Presidency and the Twelve—have been ordained as Apostles and have had *all* keys of priesthood authority conferred upon them. President Gordon B. Hinckley recently explained:

“Only the President of the Church has the right to exercise [those keys] in their fulness. He may delegate the exercise of various of them to one or more of his Brethren. . . .

“Such agency has been given by President Benson to his Counselors and

to the Twelve according to various responsibilities delegated to them.”⁵

Under assignment from the First Presidency and the Twelve, General Authorities confer the appropriate keys upon presidents of stakes and of missions, who in turn confer the needed keys upon bishops and upon quorum and branch presidents.

Assigned to each man who bears the priesthood is a loving leader because “mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion” (D&C 132:8).

That order also defines bounds of revelation. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that “it is contrary to the economy of God for any member of the Church, or any one, to receive instruction for those in authority, higher than themselves.”⁶ That same principle precludes receiving revelation for anyone outside one’s defined circle of responsibility.

Honoring the priesthood also means to honor your personal call to serve. A few do’s and don’ts may be helpful:

- **Do** learn to take counsel. Seek direction from file leaders and receive it willingly.

- **Don’t** speak ill of Church leaders.

- **Don’t** covet a calling or position.

- **Don’t** second-guess who should or should not have been called.

- **Don’t** refuse an opportunity to serve.

- **Don’t** resign from a call. **Do** inform leaders of changing circumstances in your life, knowing that leaders will weigh all factors when prayerfully considering the proper timing of your release.

The one who extends *and* the one who receives a call are both under obligation of accountability. I quote from Elder James E. Talmage:

“Those through whom the call came to him . . . are as surely held answerable for their acts as is he for his; and of every one shall be demanded a strict and personal accounting for his stewardship, a report in full of service or of neglect, of

use or abuse in the administration of the trust to him committed.”⁷

Some aspects of the priesthood are *not* related to position or title. Authority to administer a priesthood blessing, for example, is dependent only upon ordination and worthiness. The Lord would not withhold blessings from any of His children for want of a priesthood holder with a particular calling. Every elder in the Church holds the same priesthood as the President of the Church.

Brethren, please remember: the highest degree of glory is available to you only through that order of the priesthood linked to the new and everlasting covenant of marriage (see D&C 131:1–4). Therefore, your first priority in honoring the priesthood is to honor your eternal companion.

Specific counsel

Now for counsel more specific. **Husbands and fathers:** with your dear partner, shape attitudes at home. Establish a pattern of prayer. Pray regularly and vocally for your priesthood and auxiliary leaders, both local and general. Your manners of courtesy at home and of reverence in the chapel will be copied by members of your family. Help your loved ones follow proper channels when they seek guidance. Teach that counsel should be obtained from trusted parents and leaders on a local level, not from General Authorities. In the past two decades, the First Presidency has sent out essentially the same letter six times to reaffirm that policy.

Fathers, you understand the principle of *temporal* self-reliance and try to provide for a year’s supply, stored at home. Please also consider the need for *spiritual* food and self-reliance—not just for a year, but for a lifetime—also stored at home. A worthy father should have first opportunity to administer blessings to members of his family. As time moves on, his sons may then draw from that

spiritual reservoir, worthy to administer to their own families and to their parents.

Now to **young men** who bear the Aaronic (or preparatory) Priesthood: if you honor it and prepare for and are worthy of a call to be a missionary, I promise that you will “speak in the name of God the Lord” and bring His light to searching souls. To them you will be as a ministering angel, remembered with love forever. (See D&C 13.)

Though I next speak to our beloved **presidents and bishops**, the principles apply to all. When one who presides over you comes into a meeting where you have been presiding, please consult with him immediately for instruction. Determine his desires. Be certain to allow adequate time for a message from him. A poignant illustration was once related by Elder James E. Faust:

“I learned some time ago of the distress felt by members of a stake in this valley when their stake presidency was reorganized. The presiding officer was one of the most venerated and unique Apostles in all the history of the Church. [Elder] LeGrand Richards was then in his nineties but was sharp and alert. During the conference, the local people who were called on to speak took most of the time. As a result, Elder Richards had only ten or fifteen minutes remaining in the meeting. What did he do? Go overtime? No. He bore a brief testimony and closed the meeting on time.

“The members of the stake did not necessarily want to go overtime. . . . They were upset, however, because the local membership, who would have other opportunities to hear from their local leaders, would never again, and in fact never did again, have an opportunity to hear from this venerable Apostle. In short, the speakers did not respect the presiding officer.”⁸

When a presiding General Authority has spoken, no one speaks following him. After the meeting has concluded, presidents and bishops, remain at the side of your file leader until excused. He may be

impressed to give additional teaching or direction. And you may also prevent problems. For example, if a member asks a question of your leader that should not be directed to him, you are there to respond.

Now for comments about the **stake high council**. It has no president. It has no autonomy and meets, even when divided into committees, only upon call from the stake presidency. Although high councilors may be seated in the order of their call to the council, no member has seniority over another.

In contrast, **seniority** is honored among ordained Apostles—even when entering or leaving a room. President Benson related to us this account:

“Some [years] ago Elder Haight extended a special courtesy to President Romney while they were in the upper room in the temple. President Romney was lingering behind for some reason, and [Elder Haight] did not want to precede him out the door. When President Romney signaled [for him] to go first, Elder Haight replied, ‘No, President, you go first.’

“President Romney replied with his humor, ‘What’s the matter, David? Are you afraid I’m going to steal something?’”⁹

Such deference from a junior to a senior Apostle is recorded in the New Testament. When Simon Peter and John the Beloved ran to investigate the report that the body of their crucified Lord had been taken from the sepulcher, John, being younger and swifter, arrived first, yet he did not enter. He deferred to the senior Apostle, who entered the sepulcher first. (See John 20:2–6.) Seniority in the Apostleship has long been a means by which the Lord selects His presiding high priest.

Rebuke and repentance

Brethren, these matters are important. More than a century and a half ago, the Lord issued a sharp rebuke to His people. These are His words:

“Verily, condemnation resteth upon you, who are appointed to lead my Church, . . . and also upon the Church; and there must needs be a repentance and a reformation among you, in all things, in your examples before the Church and before the world, in all your manners, habits and customs, and salutations one toward another; rendering unto every man the respect due the office, calling, and priesthood whereunto I, the Lord, have appointed and ordained you.”¹⁰

If any among us are also guilty of treating as trivial such things that are sacred, we may repent and resolve to honor the priesthood and those to whom the Lord has entrusted its keys.

Brethren, to all mankind we proclaim these everlasting truths: “The Melchizedek Priesthood holds the right of presidency, and has power and authority over all the offices in the church in all ages of the world” (D&C 107:8). This power holds “the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church” (D&C 107:18). May we fully honor that priesthood, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. The reader may wish to consult James E. Talmage, “The Honor and Dignity of Priesthood,” in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75), 4:305–9.
2. President George Q. Cannon said: “[Honoring the President of the Church] will cause us to draw nearer unto the

Father and live so that we shall receive revelation from him for ourselves, that the knowledge of the Spirit shall be in our hearts, that the voice of the true Shepherd will be known to our ears, that when we hear it we will know it. . . . This is the privilege of the Latter-day Saints, and the man and woman in this Church who does not live so as to enjoy this privilege comes short of being what he should be” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 19:110).

3. “The Unique Commission of a General Authority” (address delivered at a General Authority training meeting, 2 Oct. 1985), p. 5.
4. “Commission,” p. 1.
5. In Conference Report, Oct. 1992, p. 77; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, p. 54.
6. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, ed. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938), p. 21.
7. *Messages of the First Presidency*, 4:306.
8. James E. Faust, “A Seventy Is a General Authority” (address delivered at a special training session for the Seventy, 29 Sept. 1987), p. 4.
9. “Commission,” p. 9.
10. *History of the Church*, 2:177.

President Monson

We have heard from Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder John K. Carmack of the Seventy will now speak to us, and he will be followed by Elder F. David Stanley, who was called since last April conference as one of the Seventy.

Elder John K. Carmack

Using full priesthood power

Beloved brethren, in this very room there’s quite enough power to do anything we’re called to do. We are the priesthood of God.

Recently Elder Tai and I stayed in the Everest Hotel in Kathmandu, Nepal. One evening the electric power failed. Fortunately two small candles and matches were provided. But instead of about four hundred watts of electric

power to light our rooms, our candles yielded only two candlepower, not enough light to allow us to continue our work.

The priesthood of God is potentially a greater source of power than electricity. Collectively priesthood brethren perform well, but we fall far short of our potential. Why? Could our problem be that we fail to tap our greatest source of power in exercising our priesthood? Do we trade electricity for candles?

Faith is the priesthood's power source

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the priesthood's dynamic power source. By failing to put faith first in our callings, we reduce the priesthood's light and power. Other obstacles also block its beneficial rays.

Oliver Cowdery thought he could translate under the flickering light of a candle. The Lord instructed him, "Remember that without faith you can do nothing; therefore ask in faith" (D&C 8:10).

Past priesthood leaders such as Peter, Paul, Joseph, and Brigham accomplished amazing results in their callings. How? They all did it with faith. They had no computers or fax machines. Their power depended on faith. Jesus often answered pleas for his miraculous intervention by saying, "According to your faith be it unto you" (see Matthew 9:29; 15:28).

Temptation to rely on tangible tools

Rather than relying on faith, we are tempted to stay with the comfortable and tangible tools of our temporal lives to accomplish priesthood callings. The Church has also provided some tools. These tools are useful. They have helped us achieve success, power, and control over our time. They include our natural intelligence; education and training; and preparation with manuals, handbooks, agendas, and budgets.

We operate with diligent, purposeful effort using management concepts and systems we have learned. I wouldn't say a word against these tools. They serve us well. Often they have come themselves through a process of faith and inspiration, trial and error, and intelligent effort. After all, the Lord said, "Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing" (D&C 88:119).

Add faith, however, and priesthood service becomes magnificent. Two candles suddenly burst into four hundred watts of light. More to the point, we tap into the Lord's power source, and our actions move in rhythm with His. The Lord compensates for our deficiencies. Vast, unseen reservoirs of dynamic power supply our needs.

Nephi relied on faith

The Lord commanded His Apostles to believe in Him, saying, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do" (John 14:12; see also 14:11). Clearly the power to do great works comes from faith in Christ.

Let's look at a well-known example. Nephi and his brethren received an assignment from the Lord. The assignment was to go and obtain the brass plates from Laban. They tried wisdom, charm, and persuasion—tools they were comfortable using. They even offered to trade precious things from their family treasure in exchange for the plates. Nothing worked. In fact, they fled for their lives, accused of robbery.

Only then did Nephi turn to pure faith. Here's how it worked. He convinced himself that the Lord had assigned him to get the plates. Next he conceived the mental energy and trust to try again, saying, "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded" (1 Nephi 3:7). Without knowing what he would do, Nephi began moving forward while his brothers skulked outside the city walls. "I was led by the Spirit, not knowing

beforehand the things which I should do" (4:6). Now he was moving by faith—confidence in the unknown, hope in things unseen. You know the rest.

Notice that faith and trust in the Lord came first. Then came action. Nephi had no plan except confidence in the Lord. It was really a "ready, fire, aim" approach, the opposite of conventional wisdom. Laman and Lemuel thought it foolhardy. Then the Lord's plan unfolded with Nephi being guided by unseen hands.

Walking by faith in Vietnam

Often this is the way faith works. I was assigned, for example, to escort Elder and Sister Bateman and Elder and Sister Steadman to their missionary assignments as English teachers in Hanoi, Vietnam. We planned and organized, but we had more questions than answers. After completing our planned agenda, we still had one full day unplanned. More remained to be done, but what and where?

That morning we decided to act by faith by walking out our doors. Events swept us through an amazing day of welcoming ceremonies at the Hanoi Children's Palace, dinner in our honor with Operation Smile Vietnam, and other activities planned by our hosts. Our hosts had been too busy to communicate their plans to us, but the Lord knew them and moved us into place like pawns on a chessboard.

The power of faith

In the *Lectures on Faith*, prepared by brethren under the direction of Joseph Smith in Kirtland, Ohio, the authors asked: "What are we to understand by a man's working by faith? We answer—we understand that when a man works by faith he works by mental exertion instead of physical force. It is by words, instead of exerting his physical powers, with which every being works when he works by faith" (7:3).

A brief but profound phrase in the book of Abraham describes the complete power of God's faith: "There is nothing that the Lord thy God shall take in his heart to do but what he will do it" (Abraham 3:17). With faith we can get the right things to do into our hearts and the words and mental exertion to do them. It may require leaving unstructured time in our planning and on our agenda. Then faith would have some air to breathe.

Although faith often includes positive thinking, it is much, much more than that. Faith taps into divine sources and is a manifestation of unity and partnership with the Lord. Even the ideas and words formulated by faith come by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and the power to accomplish the words formed by faith comes from God.

Even more important, faith leads directly to eternal life because in exercising faith we come to know God and His power, and we become like Him.

The brethren explained in their *Lectures on Faith* that "the plan of salvation . . . was a system of faith—it begins with faith, and continues by faith; and every blessing which is obtained in relation to it is the effect of faith" (7:17).

Overcoming obstacles to faith

Priesthood leaders need balance, wisdom, and tools that help them organize, but why can't we add the power of faith that is available? I know that many of you already do that.

It sounds easy, doesn't it? Maybe to some of you it sounds too general and simplistic. Well, in a way it is easy, but there are serious obstacles to overcome before we can add the power source of faith in our service. The hardest step may be to decide that faith comes first. Then we must overcome the obstacles. Our greatest obstacle is often unworthiness. To really have faith, we must cleanse the instruments of faith—our minds, our bodies, and our spirits.

Ironically, if we are unworthy it seems that the order of using gospel principles is, for that period of time, reversed. First repentance, then faith. Arguably, repentance was first sparked by a particle of faith, but gaining the power of faith sometimes requires repentance first.

Pride and arrogance block out faith.

Self-sufficiency, often through financial success, high educational attainment, fame, and honor among men, can keep us from having faith.

Religious fanaticism can damn our faith. In religion, as in other things, sometimes more is less.

Alcohol, drugs, salacious entertainment, pornography, and accumulation of material things clog the arteries of faith; and fear, guilt, bitterness, and resentment can choke faith. Yes, Satan throws up many obstacles. He doesn't want us to have faith.

Now go back over the list of obstacles. Do you notice any of these in children? No wonder the Lord suggested that we seek faith like that of little children.

Faith not exclusive to priesthood

Brethren, faith is not an exclusive tool of the priesthood. The Roman centurion held no priesthood, but through faith he asked the Lord to heal his servant. He added that he was not worthy to have Jesus come to his home, although he was a man whose authority others obeyed. He said, "But speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed" (Matthew 8:8). Jesus marveled at his faith. "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (8:10).

The gentile woman of Canaan also tapped into the source of power. Evil spirits had vexed her daughter, and she sought in faith to have Jesus cast the evil spirits out. Jesus, probably testing her faith, explained that He was sent to minister only to those of Israel. She simply would not be denied. "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Jesus exclaimed, "O

woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt" (Matthew 15:27-28).

Brethren, we can learn much about faith from such sisters as the woman of Canaan, from our friends of other faiths such as the Roman centurion, and especially from our children. No matter how we learn to use the power of faith, we need to have it to accomplish the awesome tasks assigned to us.

Use gifts of the Spirit more fully

Also, we need to use more fully the gifts of the Spirit, all of which operate through faith. These gifts are available to us today. Even the ultimate power—to raise the dead—is occasionally exercised by those of great faith. The sick are healed, the blind see, the lame walk, and evil spirits are cast out—all through faith and priesthood power in combination. I feel we do not enjoy enough spiritual gifts in our priesthood callings.

We can start by adding the ingredients of faith identified in the *Lectures on Faith*:

1. To know and accept that God exists.
2. To know His correct character, attributes, and perfections.
3. To know that the course of life we are now pursuing is according to God's will. (See 3:2-5.)

Let's add these three elements to our priesthood power tools. We can't do it unless we sanctify our lives and add more spiritual depth to our knowledge.

Two candlepower or 400 watts?

Now, what shall we do to put faith foremost? If we listen carefully, we will discover the key to Simon Peter's faith in the challenge given to him by the Savior prior to His resurrection:

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

"But I have prayed for thee, *that thy faith fail not*: and when thou art con-

verted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31-32; italics added).

Perhaps it is time that we humble ourselves and overcome the obstacles to faith, and then become converted as Peter did. Why go through life with two candle-power when more than four hundred watts are available? The tasks are so great! How can we possibly take the gospel to all the world and redeem the

dead at the same time? I don't know, but the power and energy to do so must and will come by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, brethren, let's plead fervently with the Lord as the Apostles of old did: "Lord, increase our faith" (Luke 17:5). Then let's use our increased faith as the primary power source in all of our callings. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder F. David Stanley

The principle of work

More than 6,000 years ago, father Adam received the commandment, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Genesis 3:19).

Some 2,700 years ago a Greek poet observed that "in front of excellence the immortal gods have put sweat, and long and steep is the way to it" (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 1.287, in John Bartlett, comp., *Familiar Quotations*, 14th ed. [Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1968], p. 67).

My young friends of the Aaronic Priesthood and you trainers of this great army of Christ, the principle of work has been taught from the foundation of the world. It is the bottom line of any forward motion of success. The frightening disappearance of work as a part of our basic ethic is alarming. We constantly hear statements such as "It's too hard," "Give me something easier," "I want it now," and "I can't wait that long" coming from our young people. The ugly disease of "nothing to do" is growing in epidemic proportions among us. It undermines the basic fabric of our nations. The prophet Ezekiel clearly defined iniquity as an "abundance of idleness" (Ezekiel 16:49).

We are what we are as a people because our ancestors were not afraid of honest, hard work. Our forefathers understood the necessity of it; sheer survival demanded it. A common ingredient

among all successful people is an understanding of what constitutes paying the price of success. Basic in that formula of paying the price is an inner determination that "I'll do whatever it takes." That means, "I'll work hard, with integrity, to achieve my goal."

Work comes before blessings

Hard work is a blessing of God. It involves going after it "with all your heart, might, mind and strength" (D&C 4:2). That alone is the difference between the average and the excellent.

Great athletes are hard workers. Points, rebounds, assists, tackles, goals, and home runs are all the result of long hours of painstaking practice and hard work. The bulk of that practice will always be on your own, away from the coach. Victory is brought to pass by one's personal diligence and commitment to hard work. The view of a champion, and the glory that surrounds him, must never be overshadowed by the long process of becoming one. There is a time of preparation and a time of victory. The second mile of hard work is what makes the difference between the exhilaration of achievement and the acceptance of mediocrity.

While I served as a mission president, many times missionaries would say to me, "But, President, I want baptisms now."

My answer was then and always will be, "You must work hard, be diligent, be humble, and exercise your prayers of faith."

"It's too hard"

Young men, are you spending too much time desiring what you want to be instead of establishing a course of discipline and working hard on what you are going to be? As I sat with two of our missionaries in a home one night, they challenged a young investigator to begin reading the Book of Mormon. His answer overwhelmed us as he sat in his recliner sipping from a twelve-ounce container from the corner convenience store. He said, "It's too hard."

Someone once said, "Thou, O God, [doth give us] all good things at the price of labor" (David Hume, *Human Nature*, in Burton Stevenson, sel., *The Macmillan Book of Proverbs, Maxims, and Famous Phrases* [New York: The Macmillan Co., 1948], p. 1331).

This young man had felt the Spirit; but, alas, the seed was sown on stony ground, and he was not willing to work hard and pay the price to gain his individual testimony. We feared that evening that by saying "It's too hard," he may have made a decision that could jeopardize his eternal life.

The secret of missionary work

Among the saddest events for all mission presidents is observing elders and sisters coming into the mission field not having learned how to work. President Ezra Taft Benson gave us a powerful key in one of his addresses on missionary work: "One of the greatest secrets of missionary work is work! If a missionary works, he will get the Spirit; if he gets the Spirit, he will teach by the Spirit; and if he teaches by the Spirit, he will touch the hearts of the people and he will be happy. There will be no homesickness, no worrying about families, for all time and talents

and interest are centered on the work of the ministry. Work, work, work—there is no satisfactory substitute, especially in missionary work" (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], p. 200).

There you have it, fathers and trainers of future missionaries. There you have it, my young friends who are now preparing for your missions and you who are currently serving. If you want to be successful, start with the bottom line of *work*. Recently we noticed a surge in baptisms in one of our missions. The mission president was asked the reason for the surge. He said, "Baptisms come from hard work. We must work smarter and much harder."

The prophet Alma said it very well while glorying in the success of Ammon and his brethren. He said, "Behold, they have labored exceedingly" (Alma 29:15).

That is a pure definition of work.

Say less and do more

Just over eight months ago a monstrous hurricane swept into Florida. Jack Demaree of the Montgomery Alabama Stake and many like him drove over two thousand miles round trip, using their vacation time to assist the hurricane victims. He brought back an article from a Florida newspaper: "In hot, humid conditions Saturday, about 12,000 volunteers—including 9,000 Mormon church members from six states who brought chain saws, plywood and tar paper—swarmed into South Florida. . . . So many people [were] at work that only two hundred showed up Saturday morning for an outdoor prayer service . . . despite the . . . prediction that more than 5,000 would attend" (Sheryl Stolberg, "Tent Cities Begin to Fill In," *Ocala, Florida, newspaper*, 6 Sept. 1992).

In my conversation with Brother Demaree about his experience, he said, "All I did was cut up trees that were blown down by the hurricane."

Brethren, using that as an analogy, cutting trees is more important than thinking about cutting trees or planning to cut

trees. We are becoming the world experts in meeting, thinking, planning, and organizing about working the work, but we need to *do it*. We need to *work*.

While many are sitting and saying and even shouting great swelling words of marginal effectiveness, hard-working Latter-day Saints will always be found diligently doing. Contrary to the belief of many, *say* and *sit* will never replace *diligently do*. When you accept an assignment or commit to work for someone, work for him. Your integrity to that commitment will follow you throughout life. Any group of young men in any quorum knows who the workers are—those hallowed, quiet few who simply know how to *get it done*. My young friends of the Aaronic Priesthood, say less and do more. Get it done.

Teaching youth to work

I am so grateful for parents who taught me how to work. There was no option in our home. It was an absolute requirement.

Fathers of Zion, teach our youth the value of honest, hard work. There is no substitute, no other alternative. Be careful that you don't train up couch potatoes. With all the advantages each of us desires to place before our children, be sure that undergirding all is the absolute of honest, hard work. Young men, learn it and do it. Let it become a part of you.

God lives, and I know it. This is his work, and he expects each of us to do it. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just listened to Elders John K. Carmack and F. David Stanley of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Now Let Us Rejoice," following which we shall hear from Bishop H. David Burton, who was sustained as First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric at October conference.

The choir and congregation sang "Now Let Us Rejoice."

Bishop H. David Burton

One of my heroes, Nephi, often used the phrase "My soul delighteth." Tonight my soul delighteth to be part of the many thousands who have gathered to learn more about our priesthood responsibilities.

Hero: Nolan Ryan

Next Monday the words "Play ball!" will ring out in major league baseball parks throughout the United States and Canada. I am saddened because one of my heroes, pitcher Lynn Nolan Ryan, Jr., recently announced that this baseball season will be his last.

Nolan will likely be elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame the first year he

is eligible. He will be remembered for his record twenty-seven major league seasons. His 95-mile-an-hour fastball is legendary; 5,600-plus strikeouts is a record that will stand for a very, very long time. Nolan Ryan is not only a great baseball pitcher; he is a wonderful, sensitive human being.

A successful baseball pitcher is able to hurl the ball with velocity and accuracy. His pitches are disguised in order to deceive the batter. A pitcher, by changing his grip on the ball or the way he releases it from his hand, makes the ball curve, slide, drop, wobble, or slow down as it approaches the batter. In baseball, good pitchers, like Nolan Ryan, are masters at deceiving batters.

Satan's false heroes

In life, he who is the greatest deceiver of all has tremendous influence. He has many names but is best known as Satan, or the devil. And he knows that "ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9).

Make no mistake about it, my young brethren, Satan is the commander in chief of deception. He is not satisfied with just taking prisoners; he wants the souls of men. One of his insidious strategies is to progressively soften our senses regarding what is right and wrong. Satan would have us convinced that it is fashionable to lie and cheat. He encourages us to view pornography by suggesting that it prepares us for the real world. He would have us believe that immorality is an attractive way of life and that obedience to the commandments of our Father in Heaven is old-fashioned. Satan constantly bombards us with deceptive propaganda desirably packaged and carefully disguised. Satan creates false heroes who, if emulated, will lead us to the depths of sin.

On the other hand, carefully selected heroes can give us a pattern for our lives and serve as our role models. They can give us courage to walk the road of life righteously. I have several heroes other than Nephi and Nolan Ryan.

Hero: Spencer W. Kimball

One evening I was working late in the Church Office Building. When I called for an elevator to go home, my mind was preoccupied. In my absent-mindedness I began to enter the elevator when a hand shot out to shake my hand and a voice firmly said, "I'm Spencer Kimball. Who might you be?" In my surprise I could not remember who I was. There stood one of my heroes; I finally mumbled something vaguely resembling my name. When I think of President Kimball, I think of *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, I think of lengthening our stride, "do it now," the priesthood for all worthy

males, and, most of all, conquering adversity. He will always be one of my heroes.

Heroes: Alma and Amulek

Alma, the high priest of the church of God, unsuccessfully attempted to preach repentance to his Nephite brethren in the city of Ammonihah. He left that city very, very discouraged. An angel appeared to him and said: "Behold, I am sent to command thee that thou return to the city of Ammonihah, and preach again unto the people of the city; yea, preach unto them. Yea, say unto them, except they repent the Lord God will destroy them" (Alma 8:16). Alma returned as commanded.

Amulek lived in that city of Ammonihah. He told of this experience: "As I was journeying to see a very near kindred, behold an angel of the Lord appeared unto me and said: Amulek, return to thine own house, for thou shalt feed a prophet of the Lord; yea, a holy man, who is a chosen man of God; for he has fasted many days because of the sins of this people, and he is an hungered, and thou shalt receive him into thy house and feed him, and he shall bless thee and thy house" (Alma 10:7).

Amulek returned and took Alma into his house to eat and to rest. Amulek was called to be Alma's missionary companion. On one occasion they were bound, beaten, and thrown into prison for preaching repentance. In response to their pleas, the Lord caused the walls of the prison to fall, killing those who had imprisoned them.

Alma and Amulek listened to the angel. They responded to the call to missionary service, and they preached repentance. They stood tall in the face of adversity and imprisonment. They are heroes whose lives are worthy of emulation.

Heroes: bishops

Through the years, each of my bishops has been a hero to me. Our current

bishop, Bishop Stephen G. Stoker, is a hero to our family.

I am grateful to bishops who helped me as a young man prepare to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood. One patient, loving bishop helped me understand that missionary service was far more important than perfecting my golf game, which had been the chief ambition of my teen years.

Today I enjoy playing golf with my sons and sons-in-law. When the boys are playing well, they extend a challenge. With nimble bodies, they hit the ball much farther than I. Because they haven't yet mastered the notion that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, I remain competitive. In their eagerness to hit the ball hard, they often drive it off the fairway or out of bounds.

Young men, place your faith and trust in your bishop. Let him help you live close to the straight line of righteousness and stay within the bounds our Father in Heaven has set. If you have strayed from that straight line, let your bishop help you change your course before the deceptive practices of Satan have you firmly in their grasp. I hope the Lord has reserved a special place in the eternities for good bishops.

Hero: my dad

Heavenly Father knew that *this* strong-willed son needed a good father. He picked out a great one for me. My dad's devotion to his children and grandchildren consumed much of his time. He loved the Lord and was about the Lord's errand throughout his days. He was not only my dad; he was one of my heroes.

Dad was the president of my priests quorum and bishop of our ward during my teenage years. You who have been a bishop's son know that sometimes performance expectations tend to be a little high for bishops' sons.

During Dad's tenure as bishop, a new meetinghouse was built in our area. Local financial shares were partially ful-

filled by providing labor. Often I arrived home to find a note on the kitchen table inviting me to join Dad in working on the new building. These invitations were not always received with great warmth and enthusiasm. It seemed to me that the bishop's son received more than his fair share of invitations to work on the new meetinghouse.

As the building neared completion, landscaping commenced. The priesthood brethren were extended a work opportunity to haul fertilizer to the site. Because the bishop was a part of the expedition, the bishop's son felt an obligation to respond. We drove to a mountain sheep corral. Into a large truck we shoveled very finely ground, dry sheep fertilizer. The wind blew much of what we threw into the truck back to us. This unsavory material gathered in our eyes, throats, noses, ears, and down our backs. I can't ever remember being more uncomfortable. I'm afraid I verbalized my feelings with emotion. When we arrived back at the meetinghouse to unload the material, I found my new bike had been stolen. My complaining was loud. Why would the Lord permit someone to steal my bike when I was about His work?

When Dad and I arrived home, we showered and sat down to an evening meal. My complaining about the day and my lost bike continued. As we knelt in prayer, Dad thanked Heavenly Father for the opportunity of the day's service and expressed love for me. He asked forgiveness for the person who had taken the bike. He noted his sorrow for the loss but expressed gratitude that it wasn't his son who had committed the theft. Dads make great heroes. I pray that if you are fortunate enough to have a father close by, he can be your hero. Dads, live in such a way that your sons and others can look up to you as heroes.

Bond with righteous heroes

Exceptional baseball batters have the gift of superb eyesight as well as excep-

tional eye-to-hand coordination. They can even see the strings on the baseball and detect the direction the ball is rotating. The batter can then better attempt to respond to the deception of the pitcher. Our Heavenly Father has given each of us such a gift to help identify and withstand the deception of Satan. It is the gift of the Holy Ghost.

I pray that you proud bearers of the Aaronic Priesthood will listen and respond to the promptings of the Holy Ghost and bond with righteous heroes in standing tall against the evils espoused by the master of deception.

I know that our Father in Heaven lives and that His Son is our Savior and Redeemer. I know they love us and want us to be successful. Of this I bear testimony in His holy name, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Bishop H. David Burton, First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, has just spoken to us. It will now be my opportunity to present a few remarks.

President Thomas S. Monson

Search and destroy

During the seemingly never-ending years of the Vietnam conflict, we frequently heard through the media's blaring voice the term *search and destroy*. This phrase helped explain to the public the peculiar nature of combat in that area of dense jungle, oppressive heat, and debilitating disease.

This war was not marked by large-scale battles on open terrain. Rather, the enemy was often not visible—but nonetheless highly dangerous—thereby leading to the concept of search and destroy. Casualties were high, suffering rampant, and destruction everywhere to be found. We will never know how many cried out their own expression of the biblical question, “Is there no balm in Gilead?”¹ The world sighed profound relief when conflict ceased and peace prevailed.

Search and rescue

I was thinking of the term *search and destroy* this past winter as I visited with a neighbor and friend in beautiful Heber Valley east of Salt Lake City.

Some snowmobile adventurers had been lost for a several-day period in the backcountry of high winds, penetrating cold, and eerie silence. My friend Johnny told me of the desperate plight of the lost and referred to the anxiety of their families. He mentioned that he was a member of the county search-and-rescue force, whose members left their businesses and farms and went in search of the lost and missing.

The searchers had prayed for a break in the winter weather, knowing the critical element of time in such a rescue. Their prayers were answered; the weather cleared. Surveying each grid of the vast area through high-powered field glasses as the helicopter flew back and forth through the mountains and ravines, the search party finally spotted the lost party. Then came the difficult task of reaching and retrieving the courageous group. All was well. The lost were found. Lives were spared. Worry and fear yielded to joy and jubilation.

Johnny, with heartfelt emotion, said to me, “I love to search and rescue. Just to look into the faces of those who could have died and feel, as well as see, their profound gratitude fills my body and soul

with compassion and thanksgiving. I've never before experienced anything quite like it."

Perhaps he was witnessing the personal understanding of the Lord's pronouncement, "Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God."² Or maybe Johnny was feeling the penetrating declaration of the Prophet Joseph Smith, who said, "It is better to save the life of a man than to raise one from the dead."³

My thoughts turned to that favorite song from Sunday School, the one that always brings tears to my eyes and compassion to my heart:

Dear to the heart of the Shepherd,
Dear are the "ninety and nine";
Dear are the sheep that have wandered
Out in the desert to pine.
Hark! he is earnestly calling,
Tenderly pleading today:
"Will you not seek for my lost ones,
Off from my shelter astray?"

The next verse reflects our response to the Shepherd's plea:

Green are the pastures inviting;
Sweet are the waters and still.
Lord, we will answer thee gladly,
"Yes, blessed Master, we will!
Make us thy true undershepherds;
Give us a love that is deep.
Send us out into the desert,
Seeking thy wandering sheep."⁴

Worldwide humanitarian service

Tonight I express the gratitude of the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve Apostles and all the General Authorities of the Church to members worldwide for your generosity and sacrifice in contributing your time, talents, and means through fast offerings and other service to alleviate suffering and to bless lives.

In the past twelve months, for example, the LDS Church participated in more than 350 hunger relief, community development, and in-kind projects in Asia, Eastern Europe, Africa, Latin America,

the Caribbean, and the United States and Canada.

Included in the 1992 projects were such diverse activities as shipping more than 7.6 million pounds of sorted, used clothing—more than 190 container loads—to overseas and domestic destinations for distribution to refugees, displaced families, and other needy. Special attention was given to needs in Africa, where clothing, blankets, and other supplies and more than a million pounds of food were authorized for famine relief and community development. Another half-million pounds of food were contributed to food banks and feeding programs for the homeless and other needs in the United States and abroad.

Couples are now serving full-time humanitarian service missions in Europe, Africa, Asia, Mongolia, and Latin America. Individual doctors, nurses, educators, and others have served short-term consulting assignments with government ministries, hospitals, schools, and other institutions in many countries. Some projects have attacked the causes of poverty and suffering by supporting community development efforts of the local people.

Though the Church sometimes implements programs directly, efforts to carry out relief and development projects are often handled through agencies which have established reputations for honest, effective service, including the American Red Cross, International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Salvation Army, Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Community Services, and other religious and civic organizations. All of this is in addition to the vast help extended by bishops of wards, presidents of branches, and leaders of missions to members of the Church throughout the world. The words of a Western Hemisphere prophet, uttered centuries ago, are still heard and followed today. King Benjamin reminded his people that "when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God."⁵

Scriptural searches and rescues

From that same sacred record we contemplate the words spoken of the people during the reign of Alma, son of Alma: "They did not send away any who were naked, or that were hungry, or that were athirst, or that were sick, or that had not been nourished; and they did not set their hearts upon riches; therefore they were liberal to all, both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, whether out of the church or in the church, having no respect to persons as to those who stood in need."⁶

The book of Luke, in one chapter, provides us two related parables which prompt our thinking and guide our footsteps in following the Master. First is the parable of the lost sheep, and second the parable of the prodigal son. The Lord began:

"What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

"And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

"And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."⁷

In the parable of the prodigal son, we remember that one son wasted his substance and was reduced to near starvation. I ponder the line "and no man gave unto him."⁸ Finally, when he came to himself he returned to the land of his father, expecting nothing but a rebuke and reprimand:

"And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

"And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

"But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

"And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

"For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."⁹

To the faithful son who was a bit critical of his father's actions toward his brother came the same response: "Thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."¹⁰

Search and rescue: Lawrence Bryson

Could I leave that long-distant time and faraway place to share with you examples of the guiding influence of the Master Shepherd and how we, in the fulfillment of our assignments, whatever they may be in His service, can see the evidence of His divine help and feel the touch of His gentle hand.

I served as a bishop during the period of the Korean War. We had received from Church headquarters a letter indicating that bishops should send a personal letter to each serviceman every month, along with a copy of the Church magazine at that time, the *Improvement Era*, and a subscription to the *Church News*. That took a little doing. In our large ward we had about eighteen servicemen. We did not have much money. The priesthood quorums, with effort, supplied funds for the subscriptions to the publications, and I took care of the letter writing. From my experience in the navy at the end of a previous war, I knew the importance of receiving word from home.

One day the sister who took the shorthand for those individually dictated letters said to me, "Bishop Monson, don't you ever get discouraged?"

I said, "No, I don't. Why?"

"Do you realize," she explained, "that this is the seventeenth consecutive monthly letter you have sent to Lawrence Bryson, and you have never received a reply?"

I said, "Well, send number seventeen. It might do the job." And it did. I received a reply from an APO number, San Francisco. Brother Bryson, far away in the Pacific, had written a short letter which began: "Dear Bishop, I ain't much at writing letters [I could have told him that seventeen months sooner], but today has been a special day. I have been ordained a teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood. My group leader has stayed close to me, and I am grateful to him." Then he said, "By the way, thanks for the *Church News*. Thanks for the magazine. But a special thanks for your letter which comes each month."

Years later at a stake conference in the Cottonwood Stake, when Elder James E. Faust was stake president, I mentioned that experience in a stake priesthood meeting. A man came up after the meeting and said, "Do you remember me?"

I looked at him. It had probably been twenty-two years since I'd seen him. I said, "Lawrence Bryson!"

He said, "That's me. Thanks for the letters. That's why I'm here today."

Where is Lawrence Bryson now? He and his wife are currently serving full-time missions. Their lives demonstrate full activity in the Church. They are searching for sheep that are lost. I think they will know where to find them. I know they will save them.

I still have that wonderful letter written to me from Lawrence Bryson and dated "Christmas Day, December 25, 1953." It was one of the most treasured Christmas gifts ever received by me. Sure, you sometimes wonder after seventeen letters have been sent why no reply has come, but I remembered a line of truth: "The wisdom of God may appear as foolishness to men. But the greatest single lesson we can learn in mortality is that

when God speaks and a man obeys, that man will always be right." The leaders of the Church had spoken. We as bishops needed only to obey. The blessing was sure to follow.

Far-reaching effects of diligent service

Brethren, in our priesthood callings I am confident that we at times wonder if we are affecting the lives of others in a favorable manner. The instructor in the quorum who prepares so diligently, the home teachers who put aside their own convenience and carry a message to the families upon whom they call, and the quorum officers who reach out to rescue will perhaps never fully know the far-reaching influence of their service. This is particularly true of the faithful missionaries who day after day carry on in the service of the Master. Never complaining, ever serving, always sacrificing for the benefit of others, these noble servants deserve our undying gratitude and our fervent prayers.

The simple words from Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher, carry an assurance that brings comfort and inspires effort: "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."¹

Search and rescue: George H. Watson

Such was my experience as pertains to President George H. Watson, who today serves as first counselor in the Naperville Illinois Stake presidency.

Brother Watson wrote a letter to me, never mailed, dated 3 October 1978, which tells of his conversion to the Church and of his baptism, which took place in the summer of 1959 in eastern Canada, where I served as the mission president at that time. I did not receive this letter until this past year, when it was carried to me by Elder John E. Fowler, who discovered its existence while visiting with the Watson family following a stake conference in Naperville. Both

Brother Watson and I have some modest reluctance in sharing with you his private letter, but feeling the impression that the account would help encourage many of you brethren participating in this worldwide priesthood meeting this evening, we shall do so.

I will conclude by reading President Watson's own words. He wrote:

"Dear Elder Monson:

"This is a letter out of the blue. Its purpose is to thank you for the letters you wrote some twenty years ago—one to me and the other about me—and to let you know the effect they had on my life.

"My name is George Watson. In 1957, at the age of twenty-one, I emigrated from Ireland, where I had grown up, to Canada. The main purpose of going to Canada was to put together sufficient money to do postgraduate work at London University.

"The firm for which I worked was in Niagara Falls, and I found a room at the ridiculously inexpensive cost of \$6.00 per week. The only drawback was that I had to drive the landlady—age seventy-three—to church each Sunday in St. Catharines, Ontario.

"I soon found this chore to be very annoying, as she used the twenty-five-minute drive to try to get me to see the missionaries from her church. I resisted this very effectively for better than a year, until one day she told me that there were two young ladies coming to supper and asked if I would care to join them. It is very difficult to be rude to lady missionaries!

"I did a great deal of thinking over the next few months and decided that although what eleven sets of missionaries were telling me felt right, I would have to give up too much, besides which I was fed up running my landlady to church. In order to stop her asking for the ride, I decided to take her half an hour late on the next Sunday and to go in and sit with her in an open-neck shirt, sneakers, and sports slacks. I thought this would embarrass her and she would not ask me again.

"My plan worked perfectly, except that she was not annoyed at being late, and I made as much impact as a damp squid. We arrived just as the Sunday School was splitting for class. I would not go into class and spent my time talking to a very fine man who was crippled and who 'understood' me. As I was to return to Ireland eight days later (July 1959), he suggested that I should join the Church on the Saturday before I left. He was to call and confirm this during the week, but I effectively countered this by not answering the phone all week. On Sunday, after a sleepless night, I phoned him to apologize and was baptized in Hamilton virtually on the way to the airport—knowing that I would never meet any Mormons in Ireland and that the Church would lose track of me.

"I have no idea, President Monson, where you found my address in Ireland, but on the Friday after I returned, I had a letter from you welcoming me into the Church, and on Sunday at 9:00 A.M. there was a knock on the door. A President Lynn stood on the doorstep saying he had had a letter from President Monson in Toronto asking him to watch over me.

"The next few months or years were traumatic. Three meetings on a Sunday were entirely unreasonable; no way would I speak in front of that group; they can't expect more than 10 percent. Even more traumatic, my girlfriend set out to show me how ridiculous I was. She ended up being baptized.

"We now live in Illinois with three wonderful children. I often sit and ponder why the Lord has blessed us so greatly. We have all had reason to feel His sustaining hand in difficult times.

"Although it is unlikely that we will ever meet, I would like to very sincerely thank you for taking the trouble to write those two letters. They have completely changed the course of our lives. I am grateful for the knowledge of the Savior's purpose in coming to earth, my relationship to Him, and what He expects of me. The courage and steadfastness of Joseph

Smith, the Prophet, and the knowledge that he imparted to us will always be a source of inspiration to me. I am thrilled at the opportunity of serving in the Lord's Church.

"May the Lord continue to bless you in His work, and thank you for the effect you have had on my life."

"[signed] George Watson"

This past Christmas, when George Watson and his beloved Chloe came to Salt Lake City to visit two of their children and a son-in-law, they came to my office so that we might formally meet. They expressed their testimonies and again conveyed their thanks for all who had participated in this human drama, this miracle in our time. Tears flowed, prayers were offered, and gratitude was conveyed.

It was an appropriate season of the year for our visit together, when all Christendom pauses for a brief moment and remembers Him—even Jesus Christ—who died that we might have eternal life. He who notes the fall of the sparrow surely orchestrated the search-and-rescue mission that brought the Watson family to His fold. May we ever be found in His service and on His errand is my humble prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Jeremiah 8:22.
2. D&C 18:10.
3. *History of the Church*, 5:366.

4. "Dear to the Heart of the Shepherd," *Hymns*, no. 221.
5. Mosiah 2:17.
6. Alma 1:30.
7. Luke 15:4–7.
8. Luke 15:16.
9. Luke 15:20–24.
10. Luke 15:32.
11. Ecclesiastes 11:1.

President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our concluding speaker.

Before hearing his remarks, we remind you that the CBS Tabernacle Choir broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 tomorrow morning. Those desiring to attend this broadcast and the Sunday morning session which follows must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M., daylight saving time.

Because daylight saving time begins at 2:00 A.M. tomorrow, we encourage you to move your clocks ahead one hour before you retire this evening.

As you leave this priesthood meeting tonight, we ask you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and to be courteous in driving.

We express our gratitude to the priesthood choir from Ricks College for the beautiful music this evening. Following President Hinckley's address, the choir will conclude by singing "God Bless Our Prophet Dear." The benediction will then be offered by Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander of the Seventy.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Speaking boy to boy

It's always a challenge to follow President Monson.

All of the deacons, teachers, and priests, stand up, will you please. Just stand up and stretch for a minute. All of the former deacons, teachers, and priests—you can stand up for a minute. Thank you very much.

I think I would like to say a few things to the boys. You older men may listen or sleep. What a wonderful thing it is to be young in this time of the history of the Church and the history of the world. Surely this is the great age of enlightenment. This is a time like no other time. Never before has there been so much of scientific discovery. Never be-

fore have there been greater opportunities for education. Never before have there been such widespread opportunities for service in the Church. I almost feel jealous of you. And then I do not. I think of the many problems with which you live. You face difficult temptations that are all around you.

Some lessons I learned as a boy

It's easy for old men to lecture young men. Rather than do that, I think I would like to do something I've never done before. If you will permit me a personal indulgence, I wish to talk with you about some lessons I learned when I was a boy.

I grew up here in Salt Lake City a very ordinary kind of freckle-faced boy. I had a good father and mother. My father was a man of education and talent. He was respected in the community. He had a love for the Church and for its leaders. President Joseph F. Smith, who was President in my childhood, was one of his heroes. He loved President Heber J. Grant, who became President of the Church in 1918.

My mother was a gifted and wonderful woman. She was an educator; but when she married she left her employment to become a housewife and mother. In our minds she was a great success.

We lived in what I thought was a large home in the First Ward. It had four rooms on the main floor: a kitchen, a dining room, a parlor, and a library. There were four bedrooms upstairs. The house stood on the corner on a large lot. There was a big lawn with many trees that shed millions of leaves, and there was an immense amount of work to be done constantly.

The lessons of work

In my early childhood we had a stove in the kitchen and a stove in the dining room. A furnace was later installed,

and what a wonderful thing that was. But it had a voracious appetite for coal, and there was no automatic stoker. The coal had to be shoveled into the furnace and carefully banked each night.

I learned a great lesson from that monster of a furnace: if you wanted to keep warm, you had to work the shovel.

My father had an idea that his boys ought to learn to work in the summer as well as in the winter, and so he bought a five-acre farm which eventually grew to include more than thirty acres. We lived there in the summer and returned to the city when school started.

We had a large orchard, and the trees had to be pruned each spring. Father took us to pruning demonstrations put on by experts from the agriculture college. We learned a great truth—that you could pretty well determine the kind of fruit you would pick in September by the way you pruned in February. The idea was to space the branches so that the fruit would be exposed to sunlight and air. Further, we learned that new, young wood produces the best fruit. That has had many applications in life.

Signs of danger

We got sick then just as people get sick now. In fact, I think we did more so. In those early years the milk we drank was not pasteurized. We, of course, did not have an automatic dishwasher, except that it was our automatic duty to wash the dishes. When we were diagnosed as having chicken pox or measles, the doctor would advise the city health department, and a man would be sent to put a sign in the front window. This was a warning to any who might wish to come to our house that they did so at their own peril.

If the disease was smallpox or diphtheria, the sign was bright orange with black letters. It said, in effect, "Stay away from this place."

I learned something I have always remembered—to watch for signs of danger and evil and stay away.

Lessons learned as a schoolboy

I attended the Hamilton School, which was a big three-story building. The structure was old and poor by today's standards, but I learned that it was not the building that made a difference; it was the teachers. When the weather would permit, we assembled in front of the school in the morning, pledged allegiance to the flag, and marched in an orderly fashion to our rooms.

We dressed neatly for school, and no unkempt appearance was tolerated. The boys wore a shirt and a tie and short trousers. We wore long black stockings that reached from the foot to above the knee. They were made of cotton and wore out quickly, so they had to be darned frequently. We learned how to darn because it was unthinkable to go to school with a hole in your stocking.

We learned a lesson on the importance of personal neatness and tidiness, and that has blessed my life ever since.

Louie and Lynn

The bane of my first-grade teacher's life was my friend Louie. He had what psychologists today might call some kind of an obsessive fixation. He would sit in class and chew his tie until it became wet and stringy. The teacher would scold him.

Louie eventually became a man of substance, and I have learned never to underestimate the potential of a boy to make something of his life even if he chews his tie.

As the years passed, I finally reached the sixth grade in that school.

My friends were essentially the same through all of those years. People didn't move much in those days. One of my friends was Lynn. That wasn't his real name, but that's what I'll call him. He was always in trouble. Lynn seemed to

have a hard time concentrating on what was going on, particularly when spring came and things looked better outside than they did inside.

Miss Spooner, our teacher, seemed to have it in for Lynn. One day at about eleven o'clock, Lynn disturbed the class, and Miss Spooner told him to go shut himself in the closet until she let him out. Lynn obediently went to the closet and closed the door behind him. When the bell rang at twelve o'clock, Lynn came out chewing the last bite of Miss Spooner's lunch. We couldn't help laughing—all but Miss Spooner, and that made matters worse. Lynn went on clowning throughout his life. He never learned until it was too late that life is a serious thing in which serious choices are to be made with much of care and prayer.

The seventh-grade strike

The next year we enrolled in junior high school. But the building could not accommodate all the students, so our class of the seventh grade was sent back to the Hamilton School.

We were insulted. We were furious. We'd spent six unhappy years in that building, and we felt we deserved something better. The boys of the class all met after school. We decided we wouldn't tolerate this kind of treatment. We were determined we'd go on strike.

The next day we did not show up. But we had no place to go. We couldn't stay home because our mothers would ask questions. We didn't think of going downtown to a show. We had no money for that. We didn't think of going to the park. We were afraid we might be seen by Mr. Clayton, the truant officer. We didn't think of going out behind the school fence and telling shady stories because we didn't know any. We'd never heard of such things as drugs or anything of the kind. We just wandered about and wasted the day.

The next morning the principal, Mr. Stearns, was at the front door of the

school to greet us. His demeanor matched his name. He said some pretty straightforward things and then told us that we could not come back to school until we brought a note from our parents. That was my first experience with a lockout. Striking, he said, was not the way to settle a problem. We were expected to be responsible citizens, and if we had a complaint we could come to the principal's office and discuss it.

There was only one thing to do, and that was to go home and get the note.

I remember walking sheepishly into the house. My mother asked what was wrong. I told her. I said that I needed a note. She wrote a note. It was very brief. It was the most stinging rebuke she ever gave me. It read as follows:

"Dear Mr. Stearns,

"Please excuse Gordon's absence yesterday. His action was simply an impulse to follow the crowd."

She signed it and handed it to me.

I walked back over to school and got there about the same time a few other boys did. We all handed our notes to Mr. Stearns. I do not know whether he read them, but I have never forgotten my mother's note. Though I had been an active party to the action we had taken, I resolved then and there that I would never do anything on the basis of simply following the crowd. I determined then and there that I would make my own decisions on the basis of their merits and my standards and not be pushed in one direction or another by those around me.

That decision has blessed my life many times, sometimes in very uncomfortable circumstances. It has kept me from doing some things which, if indulged in, could at worst have resulted in serious injury and trouble, and at the best would have cost me my self-respect.

Father's Model T

My father had a horse and buggy when I was a boy. Then one summer day in 1916 a wonderful thing happened.

It was an unforgettable thing. When he came home that evening he arrived in a shining black, brand-new Model T Ford. It was a wonderful machine, but by today's standards it was a crude and temperamental sort of thing. For instance, it did not have a self-starter. It had to be cranked. You learned something very quickly about cranking that car. You retarded the spark, or the crank would kick back and break your hand. When it rained, the coils would get wet, and then it would not start at all. From that car I learned a few simple things about making preparation to save trouble. A little canvas over the cowl would keep the coils dry. A little care in retarding the spark would make it possible to crank without breaking your hand.

But the most interesting thing was the lights. The car had no storage battery. The only electricity came from what was called a magneto. The output of the magneto was determined by the speed of the engine. If the engine was running fast, the lights were bright. If the engine slowed, the lights became a sickly yellow. I learned that if you wanted to see ahead as you were going down the road, you had to keep the engine running at a fast clip.

So, just as I'd discovered, it is with our lives. Industry, enthusiasm, and hard work lead to enlightened progress. You have to stay on your feet and keep moving if you are going to have light in your life. I still have the radiator cap of that old 1916 Model T. Here it is. It is a reminder of lessons I learned seventy-seven years ago.

I've learned something else from that car. I now ride in a car of modern vintage. It is quiet and powerful. It has every convenience, including heating and air-conditioning. What has made the difference between that old black 1916 hard-riding and noisy Model T and today's automobiles? The difference has come because thousands of dedicated and able men and women over two generations of time have planned and studied, experimented and worked together to bring about improvement.

I have learned that when people of goodwill labor cooperatively in an honest and dedicated way, there is no end to what they can accomplish.

Our family home evenings

In 1915 President Joseph F. Smith asked the people of the Church to have family home evening. My father said we would do so, that we would warm up the parlor where Mother's grand piano stood and do what the President of the Church had asked.

We were miserable performers as children. We could do all kinds of things together while playing, but for one of us to try to sing a solo before the others was like asking ice cream to stay hard on the kitchen stove. In the beginning we would laugh and make cute remarks about one another's performance. But our parents persisted. We sang together. We prayed together. We listened quietly while Mother read Bible and Book of Mormon stories. Father told us stories out of his memory. I still remember one of those stories. I found it recently while going through a book he had published some years ago. Listen to it:

"An older boy and his young companion were walking along a road which led through a field. They saw an old coat and a badly worn pair of men's shoes by the roadside, and in the distance they saw the owner working in the field.

"The younger boy suggested that they hide the shoes, conceal themselves, and watch the perplexity on the owner's face when he returned.

"The older boy . . . thought that would not be so good. He said the owner must be a very poor man. So, after talking the matter over, at his suggestion, they concluded to try another experiment. Instead of hiding the shoes, they would put a silver dollar in each one and . . . see what the owner did when he discovered the money. So they did that.

"Pretty soon the man returned from the field, put on his coat, slipped one foot

into a shoe, felt something hard, took it out and found a silver dollar. Wonder and surprise [shone] upon his face. He looked at the dollar again and again, turned around and could see nobody, then proceeded to put on the other shoe; when to his great surprise he found another dollar. His feelings overcame him. . . . He knelt down and offered aloud a prayer of thanksgiving, in which he spoke of his wife being sick and helpless and his children without bread. . . . He fervently thanked the Lord for this bounty from unknown hands and evoked the blessing of heaven upon those who gave him this needed help.

"The boys remained [hidden] until he had gone." They had been touched by his prayer and felt something warm within their hearts. As they left to walk down the road, one said to the other, "Don't you have a good feeling?" (Bryant S. Hinckley, *Not by Bread Alone* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1955], p. 95).

Out of those simple little meetings, held in the parlor of our old home, came something indescribable and wonderful. Our love for our parents was strengthened. Our love for brothers and sisters was enhanced. Our love for the Lord was increased. An appreciation for simple goodness grew in our hearts. These wonderful things came about because our parents followed the counsel of the President of the Church. I have learned something tremendously significant out of that.

Parents' love and mother's death

In that old home we knew that our father loved our mother. That was another of the great lessons of my boyhood. I have no recollection of ever hearing him speak unkindly to her or of her. He encouraged her in her individual Church activities and in neighborhood and civic responsibilities. She had much of native talent, and he encouraged her to use it. Her comfort was his constant concern.

We looked upon them as equals, companions who worked together and loved and appreciated one another as they loved us.

She likewise encouraged him and did everything in the world to make him happy. At the age of fifty she developed cancer. He was solicitous of her every need. I recall our family prayers, with his tearful pleadings and our tearful pleadings.

Of course there was no medical insurance then. He would have spent every dollar he owned to help her. He did, in fact, spend very much. He took her to Los Angeles in search of better medical care. But it was to no avail.

That was sixty-two years ago, but I remember with clarity my brokenhearted father as he stepped off the train and greeted his grief-stricken children. We walked solemnly down the station platform to the baggage car, where the casket was unloaded and taken by the mortician. We came to know even more about the tenderness of our father's heart. This has had an effect on me all of my life.

I also came to know something of death—the absolute devastation of children losing their mother—but also of peace without pain and the certainty that death cannot be the end of the soul.

Love at home

We didn't openly speak about love for one another very much in those days. We didn't have to. We felt that security, that peace, that quiet strength which comes to families who pray together, work together, and help one another.

"Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Exodus 20:12). As a boy I came to believe in that divine commandment. I think it is such a great commandment from the Lord. If it were only observed more widely, there would be far less misery in the homes of the people. Instead of

backbiting, accusation, and argument, there would be appreciation and respect and quiet love.

My father is long since gone. I have become a father, and a grandfather, and a great-grandfather. The Lord has been very kind. I have experienced my share of disappointments, of failures, of difficulties. But on balance, life has been very good. I have tried to live it with enthusiasm and appreciation. I have known much of happiness, oh, so very much. The root of it all, I believe, was planted in my childhood and nurtured in the home, the school, and the ward in which I grew, where I learned simple but important lessons in living. I cannot be grateful enough.

My heart aches and I grieve when I see the tragedy of so many broken homes, of homes where husbands do not seem to know how to treat their wives, of homes where children are abused and grow to become the abusers of another generation. None of this tragedy is necessary. I know it is not. The answer to our problems lies in following the simple gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who brought into the world His Father's love.

Brethren, will you forgive me for taking your time to talk in a personal way as I have done? I did not know how to say what I wanted to say without doing so.

Young men, "Do what is right; let the consequence follow" (*Hymns*, no. 237). "Choose the right when a choice is placed before you" (*Hymns*, no. 239).

Fathers, be good men, that your wives will speak of you with love and appreciation and your children will remember you with gratitude everlasting. I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "God Bless Our Prophet Dear."

Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander offered the benediction.

SUNDAY MORNING SESSION

The fourth general session of the 163rd Annual General Conference commenced at 10:00 A.M. on Sunday, April 4, 1993. President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music for this session, with Jerold Ottley conducting and John Longhurst at the organ.

To begin the session, the choir sang "The Morning Breaks."

President Hinckley then opened the meeting with the following remarks:

President Gordon B. Hinckley

We welcome you this Sabbath morning from the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah, to the fourth general session of the 163rd annual conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

President Ezra Taft Benson, who is watching conference in his apartment, has asked me, Brother Hinckley, to conduct this session.

We acknowledge the large audience assembled in the Tabernacle and the overflow gathering in the nearby Assembly Hall, where Elders M. Russell Ballard, Ted E. Brewerton, and Jorge A. Rojas are seated on the stand.

We extend our greetings to those of you who are participating by radio, tele-

vision, cable, or satellite transmission. We are grateful to the owners and operators of the stations who are broadcasting this conference. In addition to being assembled here on Temple Square, conference congregations are found in more than 3,500 church halls across the nation and over the seas.

We acknowledge the presence this morning of government, education, and civic leaders and of members of the Church who have assembled to worship together.

The Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Brother Jerold Ottley, with John Longhurst at the organ, will provide the music for this session. The choir opened these services by singing "The Morning Breaks" and will now sing "I Need Thee Every Hour," following which Elder William R. Bradford of the Seventy will offer the invocation.

The choir sang "I Need Thee Every Hour."

Elder William R. Bradford offered the invocation.

President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, will be our first speaker this morning.

President Thomas S. Monson

Take time to meditate

President David O. McKay would frequently suggest the need for us to turn from the hectic day-to-day schedule filled with letters to answer, calls to be made, people to see, and meetings to attend and take time to meditate, to ponder, and to reflect on the eternal truths and the

sources of the joy and happiness which comprise each person's quest.

When we do, the mundane, the mechanical, the repetitious patterns of our lives yield to the spiritual qualities, and we acquire a much-needed dimension which inspires our daily living. When I follow this counsel, thoughts of family, experiences with friends, and treasured

memories of special days and quiet nights course through my mind and bring a sweet repose to my being.

The contrasts of Christmas

The Christmas season, with its special meaning, inevitably prompts a tear, inspires a renewed commitment to God, and provides, borrowing the words from the lovely song "Calvary," "rest to the weary and peace to the soul."

I reflect on the contrasts of Christmas. The extravagant gifts, expensively packaged and professionally wrapped, reach their zenith in the famed commercial catalogs carrying the headline "For the person who has everything." In one such reading I observed a 4,000-square-foot home wrapped with a gigantic ribbon and comparable greeting card which said, "Merry Christmas." Other items included diamond-studded clubs for the golfer, a Caribbean cruise for the traveler, and a luxury trip to the Swiss Alps for the adventurer. Such seemed to fit the theme of a Christmas cartoon which showed the Three Wise Men traveling to Bethlehem with gift boxes on their camels. One says, "Mark my words, Balthazar; we're starting something with these gifts that's going to get way out of hand!"

Then there is the remembered Christmas tale of O. Henry about a young husband and wife who lived in abject poverty yet who wanted to give one another a special gift. But they had nothing to give. Then the husband had a ray of inspiration: "I shall provide my dear wife a beautiful ornamental comb to adorn her magnificent long black hair." The wife also received an idea: "I shall obtain a lovely chain for my husband's prized watch, which he values so highly."

Christmas day came; the treasured gifts were exchanged. Then comes the surprise ending so typical of O. Henry's short stories: The wife had shorn her long hair and sold it to obtain funds to purchase the watch chain, only to discover that her husband had sold his watch that

he might purchase the comb to adorn her beautiful long hair, which now she did not have.¹

The Christmas cane

At home in a hidden-away corner, I have a small black walking stick with an imitation silver handle. It once belonged to a distant relative. Why do I keep it for a period now spanning sixty years? There is a special reason. You see, as a very small boy I participated in a Christmas pageant in our ward. I was privileged to be one of the Three Wise Men. With a bandanna about my head, Mother's Chickering piano bench cover draped over my shoulder, and the black cane in my hand, I spoke my assigned lines: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."² I don't recall all the words in that pageant, but I vividly remember the feelings of my heart as the three of us "wise men" looked upward and saw a star, journeyed across the stage, found Mary with the young child Jesus, then fell down and worshiped him and opened our treasures and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

I especially liked the fact that we did not return to the evil Herod to betray the baby Jesus, but obeyed God and departed another way.

The years have flown by, the events of a busy life taking their proper places in the hallowed halls of memory, but the Christmas cane continues to occupy a special place in my home; and in my heart is a commitment to Christ.

God-given gifts that endure

For a few moments, may we set aside the catalogs of Christmas with their gifts of exotic description. Let's even turn from the flowers for Mother, the special tie for Father, the cute doll, the train that whistles, the long-awaited bicycle—even the "Star Trek" books and videos—and direct our thoughts to those God-given

gifts that endure. I have chosen from a long list just four:

1. The gift of birth.
2. The gift of peace.
3. The gift of love.
4. The gift of life eternal.

The gift of birth

First, **the gift of birth.** It has been universally bestowed on each of us. Ours was the divine privilege to depart our heavenly home to tabernacles in the flesh and to demonstrate by our lives our worthiness and qualifications to one day return to Him, precious loved ones, and a kingdom called *celestial*. Our mothers and our fathers bestowed this marvelous gift on us. Ours is the responsibility to show our gratitude by the actions of our lives.

My own father, a printer, gave me a copy of a piece he had printed. It was entitled "A Letter from a Father" and concluded with this thought: "Perhaps my greatest hope as a parent is to have such a relationship with you that when the day comes that you look down into the face of your first child, you will feel deep within you the desire to be to your child the kind of parent your dad has tried to be to you. What greater compliment could any man ask? Love, Dad."

Our gratitude to Mother for the gift of birth is equal or beyond that owed to Father. She who looked upon us as "a sweet new blossom of humanity, fresh fallen from God's own home, to flower on earth"³ and cared for our every need, comforted our every cry, and later rejoiced in any of our accomplishments and wept over our failures and disappointments, occupies a singular place of honor in our hearts.

A passage from 3 John sets forth the formula whereby we might express to our parents our gratitude for the gift of birth: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."⁴ Let us so walk. Let us so honor the givers of this priceless gift of birth.

The gift of peace

Second, **the gift of peace.** In the raucous world in which we live, the din of traffic, the blaring commercials of the media, and the sheer demands placed on our time—to say nothing of the problems of the world—cause headache, inflict pain, and sap our strength to cope. The burden of sickness or the grief of mourning a loved one departed brings us to our knees seeking heavenly help. With the ancients we may wonder, "Is there no balm in Gilead?"⁵ There is a certain sadness, even hopelessness, in the verse:

There is never a life without sadness,
There is never a heart free from pain;
If one seeks in this world for true
solace,
He seeks it forever in vain.⁶

He who was burdened with sorrow and acquainted with grief speaks to every troubled heart and bestows the gift of peace: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."⁷

He sends forth His word through the missionaries serving far and wide, proclaiming His gospel of good tidings and His salutation of peace. Vexing questions such as "Whence did I come?" "What is the purpose of my being?" and "Whither go I after death?" are answered by His special servants. Frustration flees, doubt disappears, and wonder wanes when truth is taught in boldness, yet in a spirit of humility, by those who have been called to serve the Prince of Peace—even the Lord Jesus Christ. His gift is bestowed individually: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him."⁸

The passport to peace is the practice of prayer. The feelings of the heart, humbly expressed rather than a mere recitation of words, provide the peace we seek.

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the wicked King Claudius kneels and tries to pray,

but he rises and says: "My words fly up, my thoughts remain below: Words without thoughts never to heaven go."⁹

Joseph Millett and the gift of peace

One who received and welcomed the gift of peace was Joseph Millett, an early missionary to the Maritime Provinces of Canada, who learned, while there and in his later experiences in life, of the need to rely on heavenly help. An experience which he recalled in his journal is a beautiful illustration of simple yet profound faith:

"One of my children came in, said that Brother Newton Hall's folks were out of bread. Had none that day. I put . . . our flour in [a] sack to send up to Brother Hall's. Just then Brother Hall came in. Says I, 'Brother Hall, how are you [fixed] for flour.' 'Brother Millett, we have none.' 'Well, Brother Hall, there is some in that sack. I have divided [it] and was going to send it to you. Your children told mine that you were out.' Brother Hall began to cry. Said he had tried others. Could not get any. Went to the cedars and prayed to the Lord and the Lord told him to go to Joseph Millett. 'Well, Brother Hall, you needn't bring this back if the Lord sent you for it. You don't owe me for it.' You can't tell how good it made me feel to know that the Lord knew that there was such a person as Joseph Millett."¹⁰

Prayer brought the gift of peace to Nelson Hall and to Joseph Millett.

The gift of love

Third, the gift of love. "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" queried the lawyer who spoke to Jesus. Came the prompt reply:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."¹¹

On another occasion the Lord taught, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."¹² The scriptures are filled with the importance of love and its relevance in our lives. The Book of Mormon teaches that charity is the pure love of Christ.¹³ The Master Himself provided an ideal pattern for us to follow. Of Him it was said that He "went about doing good, . . . for God was with him."¹⁴

A few lines from the favorite musical *The Sound of Music* suggest a course of action all might well follow:

A bell is no bell till you ring it,
A song is no song till you sing it,
And love in your heart wasn't put
there to stay—
Love isn't love till you give it away.¹⁵

An awareness of the elderly

A segment of our society desperately yearning for an expression of true love is found among those growing older, and particularly when they suffer from pangs of loneliness. The chill wind of dying hopes and vanished dreams whistles through the ranks of the elderly and those who approach the declining side of the summit of life.

"What they need in the loneliness of their older years is, in part at least, what we needed in the uncertain years of our youth: a sense of belonging, an assurance of being wanted, and the kindly ministrations of loving hearts and hands; not merely dutiful formality, not merely a room in a building, but room in someone's heart and life. . . .

"We cannot bring them back the morning hours of youth. But we can help them live in the warm glow of a sunset made more beautiful by our thoughtfulness, by our provision, and by our active and unfeigned love."¹⁶ So wrote Elder Richard L. Evans some years ago.

At times an awareness of the elderly is brought into focus by a reminder from one ever so young. May I share with you

a Pakistani folktale which illustrates this truth:

An ancient grandmother lived with her daughter and grandson. As she grew frail and feeble, instead of being a help around the house, she became a constant trial. She broke plates and cups, lost knives, spilled water. One day, exasperated because the old woman had broken another precious plate, the daughter sent the grandson to buy his grandmother a wooden plate. The boy hesitated because he knew a wooden plate would humiliate his grandmother. But his mother insisted, so off he went. He returned bringing not one, but two wooden plates.

"I only asked you to buy one," his mother said. "Didn't you hear me?"

"Yes," said the boy. "But I bought the second one so there would be one for you when you get old."

Willie thanks his teacher

Frequently we are inclined to wait a lifetime to express love for the kindness or help given by another even long years before. Perhaps just such an experience prompted George Herbert to say, "Thou that hast given so much to [me], give one thing more . . . a grateful heart."¹⁷

The story is told of a group of men who were talking about people who had influenced their lives and to whom they were grateful. One man thought of a high-school teacher who had introduced him to Tennyson. He decided to write and thank her.

In time, written in a feeble scrawl, came this letter:

"My Dear Willie:

"I can't tell you how much your note meant to me. I am in my eighties, living alone in a small room, cooking my own meals, lonely, and like the last leaf lingering behind. You will be interested to know that I taught school for fifty years, and yours is the first note of appreciation I have ever received. It came on a blue, cold morning, and it cheered me as nothing has for years."

As I read this account, I thought of the treasured line, "The Lord has two homes: heaven and a grateful heart."

Much more could be said pertaining to the gift of love. However, a favorite verse sums up rather well this precious gift:

I have wept in the night
For the shortness of sight
That to somebody's need made me
blind;
But I never have yet
Felt a tinge of regret
For being a little too kind.¹⁸

The gift of life

Fourth, **the gift of life**—even immortality. Our Heavenly Father's plan contains the ultimate expressions of true love. All that we hold dear—even our families, our friends, our joy, our knowledge, our testimonies—would vanish were it not for our Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Among the most cherished thoughts and writings in this world is this divine statement of truth: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."¹⁹

This precious Son, our Lord and Savior, atoned for our sins and the sins of all. That memorable night in Gethsemane His suffering was so great, His anguish so consuming that He pleaded, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."²⁰ Later, on the cruel cross, He died that we might live—and live everlastingly. Resurrection morning was preceded by pain, by suffering in accordance with the divine plan of God. Before Easter there had to be a cross. The world has witnessed no greater gift, nor has it known more lasting love.

Nephi gives to us our charge:

"Ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. . . . If ye shall press forward, feast-

ing upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.

"And now, behold, . . . this is the way; and there is none other way nor name given under heaven whereby man can be saved in the kingdom of God."²¹

I close with the words of a revered prophet, even President Harold B. Lee: "Life is God's gift to man. What we do with our life is our gift to God."

May we give generously to Him, as He has so abundantly given to us, by living and loving as He and His Son have so patiently taught, is my earnest prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. See "The Gift of the Magi."
2. Matthew 2:2.
3. Gerald Massey, in John P. Bradley, et al., comp., *The International Dictionary of Thoughts* (Chicago: J. G. Ferguson Publishing Co., 1969), p. 66.
4. 3 John 1:4.
5. Jeremiah 8:22.
6. Author unknown.
7. John 14:27.
8. Revelation 3:20.
9. Act 3, scene 3, lines 97-98.
10. In Eugene England, "Without Purse or Scrip," *New Era*, July 1975, p. 28.

11. Matthew 22:36-39.
12. John 14:21.
13. See Moroni 7:47.
14. Acts 10:38.
15. "Sixteen, Going on Seventeen," from *The Sound of Music*.
16. *Thoughts . . . for One Hundred Days* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1966), p. 222.
17. In Richard L. Evans, *Richard Evans' Quote Book* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1971), p. 238.
18. In *Improvement Era*, May 1960, p. 340.
19. John 3:16.
20. Matthew 26:39.
21. 2 Nephi 31:20-21.

The choir sang "Lord, I Would Follow Thee."

President Hinckley

President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has spoken to us, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Lord, I Would Follow Thee."

We shall now be pleased to hear from President Howard W. Hunter, President of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

President Howard W. Hunter

The path of Palm Sunday

Today is the day the Christian world traditionally calls Palm Sunday. It is the anniversary of that momentous occasion nearly two thousand years ago when Jesus of Nazareth, the very Son of God himself, began the ultimate declaration of his divinity and entered the holy city of Jerusalem as the promised Messiah that he was.

Riding on a young donkey in fulfillment of Zechariah's ancient prophecy (see Zechariah 9:9), he approached the temple on a path that the jubilant crowd

lined for him with palm leaves, flowering branches, and some of their own garments, thus carpeting the way properly for the passing of a king. He was their king; these were his subjects. "Hosanna to the Son of David," they shouted. "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest" (Matthew 21:9).

Of course, that path so lovingly lined was soon to lead to an upper room and then to Gethsemane. After stops at the home of Annas, the court of Caiaphas, and the Roman headquarters of Pilate, the path would, of course, lead on to Calvary. But it would not end there. The path

would lead to the garden tomb and the triumphant hour of resurrection that we celebrate each year on Easter Sunday, one week from today.

“Jesus, the very thought of thee”

In this lovely springtime season of the year, this annual awakening when in the northern hemisphere the world is renewed, blossoms, and turns green and fresh again, we instinctively turn our thoughts to Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, the Redeemer of mankind, the source of light, and life, and love.

As a Palm Sunday and Easter season message, I have chosen for my brief text this morning the words of an ancient and sacred hymn, which are attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux and estimated to be nearly nine hundred years old. With the rest of the Christian world, the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints sing reverently:

Jesus, the very thought of thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far thy face to see
And in thy presence rest.
[“Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee,”
Hymns, no. 141]

Think of Jesus more frequently

On Palm Sunday, and next week on Easter Sunday, our minds turn very naturally to wonderful thoughts of Jesus. Indeed, Easter, along with perhaps Christmas, may be the only time in the whole year that some of our brothers and sisters in Christ's flock find their way to church. That is admirable, but we wonder if thoughts of Jesus, which “with sweetness [fill our] breast,” ought not to be far more frequent and much more constant in all times and seasons of our lives. How often do we think of the Savior? How deeply and how gratefully and how adoringly do we reflect on his life? How central to our lives do we know him to be?

For example, how much of a normal day, a working week, or a fleeting month

is devoted to “Jesus, the very thought of thee”? Perhaps for some of us, not enough.

Surely life would be more peaceful, surely marriages and families would be stronger, certainly neighborhoods and nations would be safer and kinder and more constructive if more of the gospel of Jesus Christ “with sweetness” could fill our breasts.

Unless we pay more attention to the thoughts of our hearts, I wonder what hope we have to claim that greater joy, that sweeter prize: someday his loving “face to see and in [his] presence rest.”

Every day of our lives and in every season of the year, not just at Easter time, Jesus asks each of us, as he did following his triumphant entry into Jerusalem those many years ago, “What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?” (Matthew 22:42).

We declare that he is the Son of God, and the reality of that fact should stir our souls more frequently. I pray that it will, this Easter season and always.

A blessed name

Nor voice can sing, nor heart can
frame,
Nor can the mem'ry find
A sweeter sound than thy blest name,
O Savior of mankind!
[*Hymns*, no. 141]

We testify, as the ancient prophets and Apostles did, that the name of Christ is the only name given under heaven whereby a man, woman, or child can be saved. It is a blessed name, a gracious name, a sacred name. Truly no “voice can sing, nor heart can frame, . . . a sweeter sound than [that] blest name.”

But even as we should think on the name of Christ more often and use it more wisely and well, how tragic it is, and how deeply we are pained, that the name of the Savior of mankind has become one of the most common and most ill-used of profanities.

In this Easter season of the year—when we are reminded yet again of all that Christ has done for us, how dependent we are upon his redeeming grace and personal resurrection, and how singular his name is in the power to dispel evil and death and save the human soul—may we all do more to respect and revere his holy name and gently, courteously encourage others to do the same. With this lovely hymn as a reminder, let us lift the use of the name of deity to the sacred, sweet elevation that it deserves and that has, indeed, been commanded.

In our own day as in ancient times, Christ has declared:

“Let all men beware how they take my name in their lips—

“Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit” (D&C 63:61, 64).

We love the name of our Redeemer. May we redeem it from misuse to its rightful lofty position.

Hope of the contrite, joy of the meek

O hope of ev’ry contrite heart,
O joy of all the meek,
To those who fall, how kind thou art!
How good to those who seek!
[Hymns, no. 141]

What a lovely verse of music, and what a message of hope anchored in the gospel of Christ! Is there one among us, in any walk of life, who does not need hope and seek for greater joy? These are the universal needs and longings of the human soul, and they are the promises of Christ to his followers. Hope is extended to “ev’ry contrite heart,” and joy comes to “all the meek.”

Contrition is costly—it costs us our pride and our insensitivity, but it especially costs us our sins. For, as King Lamoni’s father knew twenty centuries ago, this is the price of true hope. “O God,” he cried, “wilt thou make thyself known unto me, and I will give away all my sins to

know thee . . . that I may be raised from the dead, and be saved at the last day” (Alma 22:18). When we too are willing to give away all our sins to know him and follow him, we too will be filled with the joy of eternal life.

And what of the meek? In a world too preoccupied with winning through intimidation and seeking to be number one, no large crowd of folk is standing in line to buy books that call for mere meekness. But the meek shall inherit the earth—a pretty impressive corporate takeover, and done *without* intimidation! Sooner or later—and we pray sooner rather than later—everyone will acknowledge that Christ’s way is not only the *right* way, but ultimately the *only* way to hope and joy. Every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess that gentleness is better than brutality, that kindness is greater than coercion, that the soft voice turneth away wrath. In the end, and sooner than that whenever possible, we must be more like him. “To those who fall, how kind thou art! How good to those who seek!”

Jesus, our only joy be thou

May I close my remarks as did the author of that ancient hymn:

Jesus, our only joy be thou,
As thou our prize wilt be;
Jesus, be thou our glory now,
And thru eternity.
[Hymns, no. 141]

That is my personal prayer and my wish for all the world this morning. I testify that Jesus is the only true source of lasting joy, that our only lasting peace is in him. I do wish him to be “our glory now,” the glory each of us yearns for individually and the only prize men and nations can permanently hold dear. He is our prize in time and in eternity. Every other prize is finally fruitless. Every other grandeur fades with time and dissolves with the elements. In the end, just as in this Passover week, we will know no true joy save it be in Christ.

At this sacred season of the year, filled with the promise of renewing life, may we be more devoted and disciplined followers of Christ. May we cherish him in our thoughts and speak his name with love. May we kneel before him with meekness and mercy. May we bless and serve others that they may do the same.

Jesus, our only joy be thou,
As thou our prize wilt be;
Jesus, be thou our glory now,
And thru eternity.

In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, President Hunter, for that beautiful testimony.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "Come, Come, Ye Saints," following which we shall hear from Elder Rex D. Pinegar, a member of the Presidency of the Seventy.

The choir and congregation sang "Come, Come, Ye Saints."

Elder Rex D. Pinegar

On behalf of the Presidency of the Seventy, we welcome with joy Brother Todd Christofferson and Brother Neil Andersen to the ranks of the Seventy. We look forward to serving with you.

The miraculous power of prayer

There have been many inspiring messages given from this Tabernacle pulpit about prayer. Today I add my testimony of the blessing of peace that comes through the miraculous power of prayer.

Alexandre Dumas, in his classic tale *The Count of Monte Cristo*, wrote, "For the happy man prayer is only a jumble of words, until the day when sorrow comes to explain to him the sublime language by means of which he speaks to God" (trans. Lowell Bair [New York: Bantam Books, 1981], p. 34).

Prayers after a fireworks accident

It was a happy, carefree time in my young life until on such a day, sorrow and tragedy brought me closer to God in humble, sincere prayer. In the summer of my thirteenth year, on a July night, I eagerly joined some neighborhood friends to light fireworks. Five of us took turns igniting a colorful assortment of Roman

candles and rockets and firecrackers. Each was a new surprise with its burst of sights and sounds through the evening sky.

Not all of our fireworks worked as they should have. Most, in fact, were what we called duds. They sputtered momentarily and then died. We set the duds aside until we had tried to light all of the fireworks. We had so many defective ones remaining, we wondered what to do. We couldn't just throw them away. What if we emptied the powder from all of them into the cardboard box? We could toss in a match and have one gigantic blast!

Fortunately for us, our idea failed—at first. The match was tossed; we quickly ran away and waited. Nothing happened. Pressing our luck, we tried a second time, using a makeshift fuse of rolled-up newspaper. Again we anxiously waited at a distance. Again, to our good, nothing happened. That is when we should have quit. Foolishly we gave it one more try; this time my friend Mark and I huddled around the box to keep the flame from being extinguished by the evening breeze.

Then it happened! The gigantic blast we thought we wanted exploded with fury into our faces. The force of the explosion knocked us off our feet, and flames from the ignited powder burned us severely. It

was a tragic scene. Responding quickly to the screams and cries of the injured youth in her driveway, our friend's mother gathered us into her home. "First we will pray," she said, "and then we will call the doctor."

That was the first of many prayers I remember being offered for us. Soon after, I felt my face, hands, and arms being wrapped in bandages. I heard the voices of my father and my doctor administering a priesthood blessing to me. I heard my mother's voice many times, pleading with Heavenly Father to please let her son see again.

I had been taught very early in my life to pray. Mother and Father had made prayer an important part of our family life. Not until that day, however, did it become so meaningful to me. In those frightening moments I found peace and comfort through prayer.

Prayer brings peace

Recently in his own pain and suffering, my friend and associate Elder Clinton Cutler said of his experience, "The Lord's peace comes not without pain, but in the midst of pain."

Our Father in Heaven has promised us peace in times of trial and has provided a way for us to come to Him in our need. He has given us the privilege and power of prayer. He has told us to pray always and has promised that He will pour out His Spirit upon us (see D&C 19:38).

Thankfully we can call upon Him anytime, anywhere. We can speak to Him in the quiet thoughts of our minds and from the deepest feelings of our hearts. It has been said that "prayer is made up of heart throbs and the righteous yearnings of the soul" (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 3rd ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1916], p. 238). Our Heavenly Father has told us He knows our thoughts and the intents of our hearts (see D&C 6:16).

President Marion G. Romney taught: "Sometimes the Lord puts thoughts in our

minds in answer to prayers. . . . [He] gives us peace in our minds" (in Conference Report, Taiwan Area Conference 1975, p. 7).

For example, in response to Oliver Cowdery's prayer to know if the translation of the plates by Joseph Smith was true, the Lord answered: "Did I not speak peace to your mind concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?" (D&C 6:23).

The peace God speaks to our minds will let us know when decisions we have made are right, when our course is true. It can come as personal inspiration and guidance to assist us in our daily life—in our homes, in our work. It can provide us with courage and hope to meet the challenges of life. The miracle of prayer, to me, is that in the private, quiet chambers of our minds and hearts, God both hears and answers prayers.

Perhaps the greatest test of our faith and the most difficult part of prayer may be to recognize the answer that comes to us in a thought or a feeling, and then to accept or act on the answer God chooses to give. Consistency in prayer, along with searching the scriptures and following the counsel of living prophets, keeps us in tune with the Lord and enables us to interpret the promptings of the Spirit more easily. The Lord has said, "Learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit, and you shall have peace in me" (D&C 19:23).

Prayer brings strength to endure

A few days ago I attended the funeral of a lifelong friend, Ralph Poulsen. He was a righteous man of accomplishment and integrity, yet he had to endure the pain and sorrow inflicted upon him by the consequences of a cruel disease. His dear wife, Joyce, suffered also as she was by his side through his agony and pain. As the days and years of suffering went on, she arrived at a time when she felt she could not handle another day. She had done all she could for him. Now a

strength beyond her own was needed. In the depth of her sorrow she pleaded more fervently to God for His help. With the morning came a blessed peace that filled her whole soul—a peace that has continued with her to this day.

There is terrible suffering in our world today. Tragic things happen to good people. God does not cause them, nor does He always prevent them. He does, however, strengthen us and bless us with His peace through earnest prayer.

"It is not the usual purpose of prayer to serve us like Aladdin's lamp, to bring us ease without effort," Elder Richard L. Evans wrote. "Prayer is not a matter of asking only. It should not be always as the beggar's upturned hand. Often the purpose of prayer is to give us strength to do what needs to be done, wisdom to see the way to solve our own problems, and ability to do our best in our tasks.

"We need to pray . . . for strength to endure, for faith and fortitude to face what sometimes must be faced" (in Richard L. Evans, Jr., *Richard L. Evans: The Man and the Message* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973], p. 289).

Finding peace when we receive answers we don't want

It was the Lord Himself who taught us by His own example how to find peace when the answers we receive are not what we asked for. On the eve of His crucifixion, with "soul . . . exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," Jesus knelt in the Garden of Gethsemane and prayed to the Father, saying, "O my Father, if it be possible [and he acknowledged 'all things are possible unto thee'], let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:38–39; see also Mark 14:36).

We can only try to imagine the anguish the Savior felt when we read in the Gospels that He was "sore amazed [and] very heavy," that He "fell on his face" and prayed not once but a second time and then a third (Mark 14:33; Matthew

26:39, 42, 44): "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

We cannot imagine the anguish of a loving Father, who, knowing what had to be done, accepted His Beloved Son's willingness to suffer for all mankind. In this agony Christ was not left alone. As if the Father were saying, "I cannot take it from you, but I can and will send you strength and peace," "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him" (Luke 22:43).

If we, like the Savior, have the faith to put our trust in our Father in Heaven, to submit to His will, the true spirit of peace will come as a witness and strength that He *has* heard and answered our prayers.

If we resist the inspiration of God and turn from His promptings, we are left to our own confusion and lack of peace.

Sometimes, when our prayers are not answered as we desire, we may feel that the Lord has rejected us or that our prayer was in vain. We may begin to doubt our worthiness before God or even the reality and power of prayer. That is when we must continue to pray with patience and faith and to listen for that peace.

Don't forget to pray

Following the incident when I was badly burned, I had felt with a surety that I would be healed. From the moment that first prayer was offered in my friend's home, I felt a comforting peace. While the doctor treated my burns, I hummed a hymn, finding comfort in these words:

When sore trials came upon you,
Did you think to pray? . . .

Oh, how praying rests the weary!
Prayer will change the night to day.
So, when life gets dark and dreary,
Don't forget to pray.

["Did You Think to Pray?" *Hymns*, no. 140]

Each day when the doctor changed my bandages, my mother would ask,

"Can he see?" For many days the answer was the same: "No, not yet." Finally, when all the bandages were permanently removed, my eyesight began to return. I had anticipated that time with anxious expectation. The peace and comfort I had earlier felt gave me assurance that all would be well. However, when my vision cleared enough for me to see my hands and face, I was shocked, unprepared for what I saw. To my terrible disappointment, I found that all was *not* well. Seeing my scarred and disfigured skin brought great fear and doubt into my mind. I can remember thinking, Nothing can help this skin to be healed—not even the Lord.

Gratefully, as my prayers and the prayers of others continued, I felt the gifts of faith and of peace restored, and then, in time, my eyesight and my skin were healed. My friends who were injured were also blessed with complete recovery.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin

Building spiritually strong families

My dear brothers and sisters, my subject today is building homes and families that are spiritually secure.

During a Manitoba Canada stake conference a few years ago, Sister Karen Beaumont described her feelings about the raging winter storms that come to their area. She said:

"I love a winter storm. . . . When the wind starts to blow and the snow begins to fall, a feeling of excitement starts to build. . . . When I can't see the trees at the neighbor's farmyard, . . . I phone my husband! . . . He then picks up the children who are at school. . . . It is hard to describe the feelings I experience as our family is gathered home, and the storm rages outside. . . . And I love it! Everyone is safe; we are together. We have lots of food and water. The longer it lasts, the better. . . . We are shut off from the world.

May we always seek to obtain the Lord's miraculous gift of peace through prayer. May we not forget to pray.

I join with Alma in saying, "May the peace of God rest upon you, . . . from this time forth and forever" (Alma 7:27).

With this testimony of peace through prayer, I bear witness of the reality of Jesus Christ and of His Father and of the Holy Ghost, who will lead our lives in the same *miraculous* way through answers to our prayers of faith. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Brother Pinegar. Brother Pinegar is a member of the Presidency of the Seventy.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, will now address us.

. . . We bask in the warmth of our home and in the warmth of our love. My heart is full, and I am at peace. Sometimes I wish I could just stay like that forever, with my family gathered around me, protected, shut off from the evil influences of the world. But alas, the storm blows itself out eventually, we dig ourselves out, and off we go to face the world again."

Perhaps all of us sometimes would like to withdraw and isolate ourselves from the storms of life and from the fiery darts of Satan. However, we must be in the world but not of the world, meaning to go forward in the midst of the sin, evil, and corruption that are in the world but resisting and rejecting them. Being in the world can be frightening because we live at a time when Satan is becoming more and more bold. The Lord said, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15).

Evil in the world

A recent report titled "Children in Crisis" reflected an aspect of this evil. The editors of a national magazine considered at length what is happening to our children:

"Of the 65 million Americans under 18, [many] live in poverty, 22% live in single-parent homes, and almost 3% live with no parent at all. Violence among the young is . . . rampant. . . .

" . . . Playground fights that used to end in bloody noses now end in [some fatalities]. Schools that once considered talking in class a capital offense are routinely [checking children] for weapons, questioning them about drugs. . . . A good public education, safe streets, and family dinners—with both father and mother present—seem like quaint memories of a far distant past. . . .

"The parents of nearly 2,750 children separate or divorce each day. . . .

"Every day over 500 children ages 10 to 14 begin using illegal drugs, and over 1,000 start drinking alcohol. Nearly half of all middle-schoolers abuse drugs or alcohol or [become involved in immorality]."² Data from other nations are equally alarming.

These and many other ills of our society today have their source in the breakdown of the family. If Satan can weaken or destroy the loving relationships among members of families, he can cause more misery and more unhappiness for more people than he could in any other way.

Homes can provide security

The place to cure most of the ills of society is in the homes of the people. Building our homes as fortresses of righteousness for protection from the world takes constant labor and diligence. Membership in the Church is no guarantee of a strong, happy family. Often parents feel overwhelmed. Many must accomplish the whole job single-handedly while bearing all of the emotional pain of divorce. The

Lord has provided a plan that will help us be successful in meeting every challenge that may confront us.

In the plan of salvation, *all* families are precious instruments in the Lord's hands to help direct His children toward a celestial destination. The righteous molding of an immortal soul is the highest work we can do, and the home is the place to do it. To accomplish this eternal work, we should make our homes gospel centered. When peace and harmony abound, the Holy Spirit will ever be present. The storms of the evil one can be stopped at the very entrance of our homes.

Let us be sure the spiritual foundation of each home is the rock of our Redeemer, as Helaman taught his sons: "And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall" (Helaman 5:12).

The Lord's standards for building a temple apply also to building spiritual strength in our homes: "Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing; and establish a house, even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God" (D&C 88:119). Do we heed this counsel from the Lord? Do we do what He asks? We would do well to build our homes according to this plan, or they are destined to fail.

A house of prayer and fasting

To make our homes become houses of prayer and fasting, we "pray always, that [we] may come off conqueror; yea,

that [we] may . . . escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work" (D&C 10:5).

Our families should gather for family prayer morning and night. In addition, we should offer our own individual prayers for our personal needs.

A house of faith

We can make each home a house of faith by believing in the goodness of God and believing that we *can* live gospel principles and live in peace and security. We need to have the faith to be obedient, to keep trying, and to keep a positive outlook. Sometimes we get discouraged and feel like giving up. But as an old cowboy once said, "If I get bucked off, I must get back up on the horse and ride on." We can never give up.

When I think of faith, I think of the two great Book of Mormon prophets Nephi and Alma as models. In faith, Nephi returned to Jerusalem for the plates of brass, "not knowing beforehand the things which [he] should do" (1 Nephi 4:6). Alma prayed in faith for the repentance of his wayward son, who had become "a very wicked and an idolatrous man" and "was going about to destroy the church of God" (Mosiah 27:8, 10; see 27:8-37).

A house of learning and glory

Every home is a house of learning, either for good or otherwise. Family members may learn to be obedient, honest, industrious, self-reliant, and faithful in living gospel principles, or they may learn something else. Learning the gospel in the homes of Church members should be centered on the scriptures and on the words of latter-day prophets.

The Lord has commanded parents to teach their children. King Benjamin instructed parents:

"Ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of

God, and fight and quarrel one with another, and serve the devil. . . .

"But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another" (Mosiah 4:14-15).

Emphasizing this duty, the Lord cautioned that if parents do not teach their children "to understand the doctrine of repentance, faith in Christ the Son of the living God, and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, . . . the sin be upon the heads of the parents" (D&C 68:25).

A personal word of counsel to parents: teach your children to pray, to rely on the Lord for guidance, and to express appreciation for their blessings. Children learn from you to distinguish between right and wrong. They learn that lying, cheating, stealing, or coveting possessions of others is wrong. Help them learn to keep the Sabbath day holy and to pay their tithing. Teach them to learn and obey the commandments of God. Teach your young children to work, and teach them that honest labor develops dignity and self-respect. Help them find pleasure in work and feel the satisfaction that comes from a job well done.

In 1904, President Joseph F. Smith said to parents: "Do not let your children out to specialists . . . , but teach them by your own precept and example, by your own fireside. Be a specialist yourself in the truth. . . . Not one child in a hundred would go astray, if the home environment, example and training, were in harmony with the truth in the gospel of Christ, as revealed and taught to the Latter-day Saints."

Family home evening

The ideal way to transform your home into a house of learning is to hold family home evening faithfully. The Church has reserved Monday evening for that purpose. In 1915 the First Presidency instructed local leaders and parents to inaugurate a home evening, a time when

parents should teach their families the principles of the gospel. The Presidency wrote: "If the Saints obey this counsel, we promise that great blessings will result. Love at home and obedience to parents will increase. Faith will be developed in the hearts of the youth of Israel, and they will gain power to combat the evil influence and temptations which beset them."⁴

President David O. McKay gave the same promise in 1965 and added that the youth will gain power "to choose righteousness and peace, and be assured an eternal place in the family circle of our Father."⁵ In 1976 the Presidency reaffirmed that "regular participation in family home evening will develop increased personal worth, family unity, love for our fellowmen, and trust in our Father in heaven."⁶

Considering these glorious promises, we would expect every faithful member to be exceedingly diligent in following this prophetic counsel. But of course we are all human, and our best plans don't always materialize. Why not? Let it not be for lack of commitment. I know the Lord will keep his promises. I know also that we can keep this commandment if we will organize ourselves and prepare "every needful thing" (D&C 88:119).

I am grateful that my parents and grandparents provided such traditions of learning for our family. My father wrote this account of how his parents taught their children:

"[The] musical, cheerful voice [of my mother] called, 'Come, children, it is the singing and story hour.' . . . She seated herself in a well-used rocking chair, admonished us to listen carefully, to sing well, and to ask questions. . . .

" . . . We learned the words of the song by rote, and the meaning or story of each song was made clear to us. 'Joseph Smith's First Prayer' brought to us the story of the restoration of the gospel and the story of his life was made most impressive. 'Come, Come, Ye Saints' opened the door to the richness of pioneer achievement, faith, and loyalty. . . .

" . . . A testimony of Joseph Smith's divine calling, of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, and above all, the reality of our Heavenly Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, were the blessings derived from the family song and story hour."

My father further wrote: "My heart is filled with gratitude to my angel mother for . . . teaching me the doctrines of repentance, faith, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. She taught me the power and blessing of prayer, of the actual existence of the Father and the Son, and that Joseph Smith saw and talked to them when a boy fourteen years of age. We knew from her teaching that our Prophet saw other heavenly messengers . . . , and that through them the Church of Jesus Christ was restored to the earth."

When I was a boy, our family home evening took place at the dinner table. It was most pleasant and enjoyable. It was a time when our father would reminisce and tell us about his life. He often told us of his inspirational and exciting experiences while preaching the gospel as a missionary in Germany. Each story seemed to improve the more often it was related. I grew up never doubting that I would become a missionary, and I never lost the zeal that he instilled in my heart. Our mother taught us about the nobility of her pioneer parents and their great faith in the gospel.

Home can literally become a house of glory. Memories of early childhood can become significant in our daily lives.

A house of order

To instill order in our homes, parents should be in charge and exercise parental authority in righteous dominion to establish acceptable standards of behavior for their children, setting limits and adhering to them consistently. They are to teach and guide their children "by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned; by kindness, . . . reproofing betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy

Ghost; and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love" (D&C 121:41-43). Parents then will earn the respect of their children, and children will honor their parents, unifying families.

Other safeguards of order in our homes include assuring that children are blessed and baptized and that sons are ordained to the priesthood. In addition, they should be worthy to enter the holy temples, become missionaries, and receive the crowning blessing of an eternal marriage.

A house of God

My brothers and sisters, if you will make your home a house of prayer and fasting, faith, learning and glory, and order, it can become a house of God. If you build your homes on the foundation rock of our Redeemer and the gospel, they can be sanctuaries where your families can be sheltered from the raging storms of life.

I testify of the divinity of the Savior, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We are the spiritual offspring of our Heavenly Father. He is mindful of each one of us and wants our homes and our families to be spiritually strong. Joseph Smith is a true prophet of God, as are all of his successors, including President Ezra Taft Benson. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Prices paid for temple blessings

I'm sure you recognize that it is an awesome responsibility to speak to this vast congregation. I seek your faith.

Last Thursday, as part of our preparation for this conference, all the General Authorities had an experience familiar to many of you in this congregation. In a spirit of fasting and prayer, we and our wives partook of the wonderful blessing

NOTES

1. Address delivered at the Winnipeg Manitoba Stake conference, 27 Oct. 1990.
2. Louis S. Richman, "Struggling to Save Our Kids," *Fortune*, 10 Aug. 1992, pp. 34-35.
3. *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1939), p. 302.
4. In James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75), 4:339.
5. *Family Home Evening Manual* (1965), p. iii.
6. *Family Home Evening: Happiness through Faith in Jesus Christ* (manual, 1976), p. 3.
7. Joseph L. Wirthlin, *A Heritage of Faith*, comp. Richard B. Wirthlin (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1964), pp. 41-43.

The choir sang "The Lord Is My Shepherd."

President Hinckley

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin has just addressed us, and the Tabernacle Choir has presented that beautiful setting of the Twenty-third Psalm.

Following my remarks, the benediction will be offered by Elder Cree-L Kofford of the Seventy. The conference will then be adjourned until two o'clock this afternoon.

of an endowment session in the Salt Lake Temple.

We left that experience better men and better women because everything that occurred there was uplifting and refining.

I need not remind you that it is a precious privilege to enter a house of the Lord and participate in the ordinances therein administered. How remarkable is each of these sacred buildings which has been dedicated for purposes that are

divine and eternal in their nature. They are available to all of us because of a price paid by others.

The heaviest price of all was paid by the Son of God, the Savior and Redeemer of the world. He gave his life on Calvary's cross for the sins of all mankind. Because of that gift, all are assured the blessings of the Resurrection. And further, because of that gift, there may be eternal life and exaltation in our Father's kingdom if we make the effort to gain it.

In comparison with the immensity of the Savior's sacrifice and the consequences of His atonement, the price to erect these sacred temples is small indeed.

It was so counted by those who constructed the magnificent Salt Lake Temple.

The placing of the capstone

Today is the first Sunday of April 1993. Go back with me an even century to this same Temple Square. No, make it an even 101 years. It is April conference of 1892. These grounds are crowded with people. The multitude is the largest ever assembled in this area of the West. There are thousands and thousands of them. All cannot get on the grounds, so large is the number. They are on surrounding streets. Some have climbed telephone poles; others, trees. The occasion is the placing of the capstone of the temple, the great round granite sphere which crowns the highest steeple on the east end. It is a day of celebration. Atop the ball is a bronze figure gilded with gold. The figure represents Moroni—prophet, writer, and compiler of the Book of Mormon. The figure represents the angel spoken of by John the Revelator when he declared with prophetic vision:

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

"Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of

his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Revelation 14:6-7).

In the presence of that multitude, President Wilford Woodruff touched a switch. The capstone with the angel settled in place. President Woodruff led the multitude in a great and sacred shout: "Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna to God and the Lamb!"

There had been nothing before it and there has been nothing just like it since.

Forty years of struggle and faith

The shout was an expression of worship. It was an expression of gratitude. This was an unequalled day of thanksgiving. This was a day of which these people had dreamed for almost forty years. You have heard and read and seen much recently concerning that forty-year struggle.

My six-year-old great-grandson, Peter, was in Salt Lake City on vacation with his family last summer. His parents brought him here to Temple Square. They pointed out the temple and explained that it had taken forty years to build. He asked, "Why did it take the pioneers forty years to build the temple when it took the Lord only six days to create the whole world?"

In July of 1847 Brigham Young had pointed out the location, only four days after the pioneers arrived in the valley. That spot had been marked by Wilford Woodruff. On April 6, 1853, the cornerstones were laid. All of you are familiar with the history of the years that followed—years of effort and heartbreaking disappointment; years of labor in sunshine and storm to bring great blocks of granite from these everlasting hills and to dress that stone, each piece according to a carefully designed pattern; years of unyielding faith in the pursuit of a goal.

These were years during which three other beautiful temples had been erected in this territory—in St. George, in Logan, and in Manti.

But the greatest dream of all centered here on Temple Square. And now by April of 1892 the exterior walls, steeples, and roof had been completed. Small wonder that the people shouted hosanna. A generation and more had passed since the work had commenced. Wilford Woodruff was now eighty-five and President of the Church. Before the vast crowd assembled on that day, Elder Francis M. Lyman made a motion that they now finish the interior and dedicate the temple one year from that day, April 6, 1893, forty years from the day of the laying of the cornerstones.

A mighty shout of approval filled the air.

Finishing the temple's interior

But it was one thing to say yes in the excitement of the occasion and another to actually accomplish the work. Some with practical minds and substantial experience said it could never be done.

The building was a shell. A mighty work of consecrated effort was commenced to finish the interior.

Floors were laid, partitions set in place, plumbing installed, and electrical lines run. And then came the tremendous finishing work.

Wooden lath by the mile was nailed to the framing. Lime by the ton was slaked to become plaster. Timber was cut, seasoned, sawed, and shaped into magnificently beautiful woodwork.

While preparing the ordinances for use in more modern temples, I have spent hours and days working in the magnificent fifth-floor Assembly Room of the Salt Lake Temple. I have marveled at the craftsmanship of those who built such strong and graceful structures as the four corner stairways of that room. I have appreciated architectural masterpieces across this world, but I have never seen more beautiful workmanship than is found in the house of the Lord. There are many fluted columns with delicately carved floral pieces at their crown. There

are numerous intricate and artistic design works made in stone and wood and plaster. Nothing was spared to make this house of God a place of beauty.

It must have appeared impossible to get all of this done in a year's time. But craftsmen who had learned their exacting trades in Europe and the British Isles, and who had come as converts to these valleys of western America, exerted themselves unsparingly. Somehow it happened. Somehow it all came together, and this within a period of twelve months.

Wonder of wonders and miracle of miracles, it was ready on the fifth of April. Leading newspapers of America had sent correspondents. Unstinting was their praise of what they saw. The day before the dedication, President Woodruff invited a substantial number of non-members of the Church to go through the building. They were moved. They recognized that here was beauty that had come not alone of skill but also of inspiration.

Latter-day temple building

May I now leave my narrative for a few moments to say that I stand in reverent appreciation and gratitude for this singular accomplishment. All of this was done in the days of the poverty of our people. We have since built and dedicated forty-one additional temples, every one a classic in its own right. We shall dedicate another beautiful temple in the San Diego area later this month. We have been blessed with the means to do all of this. These means have come of the dedicated consecrations of our people. Every one of these buildings is sacred. Every one contains the inscription found on the east wall of the Salt Lake Temple: "Holiness to the Lord—the House of the Lord." Every one has been dedicated for the same purpose: to assist in accomplishing the divine work of God our Eternal Father, who declared, "This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

The ordinances that are administered in each of these temples are identical to and as efficacious as the ordinances administered in the Salt Lake Temple.

We have been criticized for the cost of these structures, a cost which results from the exceptional quality of the workmanship and the materials that go into them. Those who criticize do not understand that these houses are dedicated as the abode of Deity and, as Brigham Young stated, are to stand through the Millennium.

To me it is significant that the Salt Lake Temple, built in pioneer times, is the largest we have ever built regardless of our circumstances. Our architects say that it contains 253,000 square feet. By comparison, the beautiful Los Angeles Temple contains 190,000. The Washington Temple, which is seen by hundreds of thousands who drive the Beltway, contains 160,000. I think that our people have never in all of our history undertaken or completed a building of such magnitude, complexity of design, and artistic excellence as the structure we today honor on the centennial of its dedication.

Purposes of temples

But why all of this effort centered in one building, and why all of this labor to build others to serve the same purposes?

It was then as it is now. Those purposes, for they are several in number, are set forth in words of revealed truth. Listen to a few lines from the dedicatory prayer offered at the Kirtland Temple in 1836, language which came to the Prophet Joseph Smith by revelation:

"And we ask thee, Holy Father, that thy servants may go forth from this house armed with thy power, and that thy name may be upon them, and thy glory be round about them, and thine angels have charge over them" (D&C 109:22).

And further:

"Put upon thy servants the testimony of the covenant, that when they go out and proclaim thy word they may seal up

the law, and prepare the hearts of thy saints for all those judgments thou art about to send, in thy wrath, upon the inhabitants of the earth, because of their transgressions, that thy people may not faint in the day of trouble" (D&C 109:38).

And from further revelation received in the days of Nauvoo:

"For there is not a place found on earth that he [the Lord] may come to and restore again that which was lost unto you, or which he hath taken away, even the fulness of the priesthood.

"For a baptismal font there is not upon the earth, that they, my saints, may be baptized for those who are dead—

"For this ordinance belongeth to my house. . . .

" . . . I command you, all ye my saints, to build a house unto me. . . .

"And verily I say unto you, let this house be built unto my name, that I may reveal mine ordinances therein unto my people;

"For I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times" (D&C 124:28–31, 40–41).

Temples express our testimony

Each temple built by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stands as an expression of the testimony of this people that God our Eternal Father lives, that He has a plan for the blessing of His sons and daughters of all generations, that His Beloved Son, Jesus the Christ, who was born in Bethlehem of Judea and crucified on the cross of Golgotha, is the Savior and Redeemer of the world, whose atoning sacrifice makes possible the fulfillment of that plan in the eternal life of each who accepts and lives the gospel. Every temple, be it large or small, old or new, is an expression of our testimony that life beyond the grave is as real and certain as is mortality. There would be no

need for temples if the human spirit and soul were not eternal. Every ordinance performed in these sacred houses is everlasting in its consequences. While upon the earth the Lord conferred upon His chosen disciples the eternal priesthood, saying:

"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19).

This same authority was bestowed in this generation under the hands of Peter, James, and John, who had received it directly from the Lord. This power to seal in the heavens that which is sealed upon the earth is exercised in these holy houses. Every one of us is subject to mortal death. But through the eternal plan made possible by the sacrifice of the Redeemer, all may go on to glories infinitely greater than any of the wondrous things of this life.

This is why those of an earlier generation struggled so hard with such tremendous faith to build a house worthy to be dedicated to God our Eternal Father and His Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And such was the purpose in building the temples that preceded the Salt Lake Temple and in building those which have followed, including the beautiful new San Diego Temple due soon for dedication.

Other temples planned

Parenthetically I take this opportunity to say that there will be others. A beautiful temple in Bountiful, Utah, is scheduled to be dedicated in 1995. A site in American Fork, Utah, which the Church has owned for many years, will become the location for another.

Construction is proceeding on another in Orlando, Florida. Hopefully sometime this year we shall break ground for the St. Louis Missouri Temple. A site has been secured in Connecticut, and yet another in northern England. Architec-

tural work is proceeding on projected temples in Bogotá, Colombia; Guayaquil, Ecuador; and in Hong Kong, and we are in the process of acquiring property in Spain and at least three other nations.

While doing all of this, we are doing as our forefathers did—we are enlarging and strengthening the stakes of Zion; we are carrying the gospel to the nations of the earth; we are carrying forward a mighty undertaking of family history research so that a work of redemption might go forward in behalf of millions who have passed beyond the veil of death. We are assisting the poor and the needy and contributing generously to the feeding and clothing of many thousands in foreign lands—people not of our faith but who are made hungry and destitute because of conflict and the ravages of nature.

Dedication of the Salt Lake Temple

Now let me return to April 6, 1893. A terrible storm arose that day. Rain fell in torrents, and the wind blew with savage fury. It was as if the forces of evil were lashing out in violent protest against this act of consecration.

But all was peace and quiet within the thick granite walls. The aged prophet, then eighty-six, led the way to the beautiful fifth-floor assembly room. The room was filled to capacity in this, the first of forty-one sessions. After appropriate preliminary expressions in music and speech, President Woodruff stepped to the pulpit at the east end of the room and offered the prayer of dedication.

It was a moving and powerful prayer. It was an expression of the hearts of those who love the Lord.

It was followed by a wondrous voicing of the Hosanna Shout by all assembled. The choir then burst forth with Evan Stephens's setting of those same words of praise to the Almighty: "Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna to God and the Lamb!"

Then the congregation joined in singing "The Spirit of God like a Fire Is Burning," which had first been sung at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple.

And now, as I leave with you my testimony of this sacred house, of the faith of those who built it, of the truth and validity of the ordinances which are performed therein, I have invited the Tabernacle Choir to sing again this same Hosanna Anthem, followed by the congregations, wherever we may be, singing, "The Spirit of God like a fire is burning! The latter-day glory begins to come forth" (*Hymns*, no. 2).

I hope that as we do so, there will be stirred within each of us a flaming testimony of the divinity of this work and a spirit of gratitude to the Almighty, whose kingdom this is. In the name of our Divine Redeemer, Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang the Hosanna Anthem and was joined by the congregation in singing the first verse of "The Spirit of God."

Elder Cree-L Kofford offered the benediction.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON SESSION

The fifth session of the 163rd Annual General Conference commenced at 2:00 P.M. on Sunday, April 4, 1993. President Thomas S. Monson, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, conducted this session.

The Tabernacle Choir provided the music, with Donald Ripplinger conducting and Clay Christiansen at the organ.

President Monson made the following remarks as the meeting began:

President Thomas S. Monson

We welcome you this afternoon to the fifth and concluding session of the 163rd Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. President Ezra Taft Benson, who is watching this session in his apartment, has asked that I, Brother Monson, conduct.

To those in the Assembly Hall, we note that Elders Joseph B. Wirthlin, Joc J. Christensen, and Julio E. Dávila are seated on the stand.

We also send our greetings and blessings to members of the Church and many friends everywhere who are participating in these proceedings by way of

radio, television, cable, or satellite transmission.

The Tabernacle Choir, directed by Donald Ripplinger and accompanied by Clay Christiansen, will provide the music for this session.

The choir will begin this service by singing "For the Strength of the Hills." The invocation will then be offered by Elder Carlos E. Asay, a member of the Presidency of the Seventy.

The choir sang "For the Strength of the Hills."

Elder Carlos E. Asay offered the invocation.

President Monson

The choir will now sing "Though Deepening Trials," and Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will then be our first speaker.

The choir sang "Though Deepening Trials."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

"The enemy is combined"

Years ago, I wondered over the scriptural imagery of angels waiting "day and night" for "the great command" to come down and reap the tares in a wicked and suffering world; it seemed rather eager to me (see D&C 38:12; 86:5). Given such massive, needless human suffering, I don't wonder anymore!

Even so, the final reaping will occur only when the Father determines that the world is "fully ripe." Meanwhile, brothers and sisters, the challenge is surviving spiritually in a deteriorating "wheat and tares" world (D&C 86:7).

Granted, occasionally a few defectors or dissidents may try to vex us as they hyperventilate over their particular concerns, but it is the engulfing effects of that deteriorating world on Church members which are the clear and present danger. "Evils and designs" really do operate through "conspiring [individuals] in the last days" (D&C 89:4). The Lord has even announced, "Behold, the enemy is combined" (D&C 38:12).

Evils need not intimidate

Yet we must not be intimidated or lose our composure even though the once morally unacceptable is becoming acceptable, as if frequency somehow conferred respectability!

One of the most subtle forms of intimidation is the gradual normalization of aberration. Alexander Pope so cautioned:

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

[*An Essay on Man*, epistle II, lines 217–20]

Today, lust openly parades as love, license cleverly poses as liberty, and raucous sounds mockingly masquerade as music. Evil even calls itself good and often gets away with it!

While I would not shrink the circumference of freedom, the size of that circle is not the sole measure of social well-being.

Hence, to exult, as some do, over how much decadence is permissible at the edges ignores the erosive effects of such grossness upon all within that circle. Yeats's descriptive imagery fits:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.
[William Butler Yeats, "The Second Coming," stanza 1]

Attributed to historian Will Durant are these relevant words: "If the hunger for liberty destroys order, the hunger for order will destroy liberty." In this connection, how can there possibly be a disturbing loss of individual impulse control without a corresponding loss of collective freedom?

Violence and abortion

Violence abounds, often as people purchase drugs in order to "tune out" of the world instead of overcoming it. Just as foretold, our days actually are fast resembling the days of Noah, especially notable for their pattern of corruption and violence (see Matthew 24:37; Genesis 6:11). No wonder the adversary steadily promotes all the ancient sins—not because he is uninventive but because his harvest is so constant.

Abortion, which has increased enormously, causes one to ask, "Have we strayed so far from God's second great

commandment—love thy neighbor—that a baby in a womb no longer qualifies to be loved—at least as a mother's neighbor?" Even so, violence to an unborn child does not justify other violence!

Lack of neighboring

What of neighboring? Long ago, Tocqueville anticipated how individualism, unenriched by family and community, could produce the "lonely crowd," saying:

"Thus not only does democracy make every man forget his ancestors, but it hides his descendants and separates his contemporaries from him; it throws him back forever upon himself alone and threatens in the end to confine him entirely within the solitude of his own heart" (Alexis de Tocqueville, "Democracy in America," in Andrew M. Scott, *Political Thought in America* [New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1959], p. 225).

In their search for identity and belonging, too many supposedly savvy teens are now confined to the solitude of a lonely gang. What is the lasting advantage of becoming streetwise if one is on a street to nowhere? Gangs mark the failure of both families and communities as well as symbolizing the pervasive revolt against authority.

Talk shows and soap operas

Instead of being communicating neighbors, we are flooded with talk shows, some of which feature not real conversation but exhibitionism and verbal voyeurism among virtual strangers.

We are lathered with soap operas in need of nothing so much as soap—for the scrubbing of themselves! Some seriously maintain that media violence and sleaze leave consumers untouched. But revenue is received from commercials precisely because of their influence. Either we deserve reforms, or sponsors deserve refunds!

Sin makes us "past feeling"

Those who mock the traditional moral values should heed this lesson of history from the Durants:

"A youth boiling with hormones will wonder why he should not give full freedom to his sexual desires; and if he is unchecked by custom, morals, or laws, he may ruin his life before he matures sufficiently to understand that sex is a river of fire that must be banked and cooled by a hundred restraints if it is not to consume both the individual and the group" (Will and Ariel Durant, *The Lessons of History* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968], pp. 35–36).

Lasciviousness wrongly celebrates the capacity to feel, so that people lose their capacity to feel! Three different prophets in three different dispensations bemoaned those who became "past feeling" (see 1 Nephi 17:45; Ephesians 4:19; Moroni 9:20). Do we really expect those presently "past feeling" to fashion an acceptable future? Gross sin not only dulls the feelings, it also impairs the intellect. After murdering Abel, Cain ironically boasted, "I am free!" (Moses 5:33). Did the herd of Gadarene swine similarly console themselves, thinking that they were actually rugged individualists as they raced down the hill to their destruction?

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn lamented recently how those who hold that "there is no God, there is no truth, the universe is chaotic, all is relative" constitute a "relentless cult of novelty . . . [which] conceals an unyielding and long-sustained attempt to undermine, ridicule and uproot all moral precepts" ("The Relentless Cult of Novelty and How It Wrecked the Century," *The New York Times Book Review*, 7 Feb. 1993, p. 17).

Protecting pornography and resisting moral education

Today's anguishing mortal scene gives rise to still other questions.

Pornography especially victimizes women and children. Why then the inordinate preoccupation with its protection? Pornography is better protected than citizens on the streets!

Even with its flaws, the family is basic, and since no other institution can compensate fully for failure in the family, why then, instead of enhancing the family, the desperate search for substitutes? Why not require family impact studies before proceeding with this program or that remedy, since of all environmental concerns the family should be first? Hundreds of governmental departments and programs protect various interests, but which one protects the family?

Since democracy depends upon citizens' obedience to the unenforceable, why then the stiff resistance to moral education which could emphasize widely shared and time-tested principles?

A sin-resistant counterculture

Only reform and self-restraint, institutional and individual, can finally rescue society! Only a sufficient number of sin-resistant souls can change the marketplace. As Church members we should be part of that sin-resistant counterculture. Instead, too many members are sliding down the slope, though perhaps at a slower pace.

In a "wheat and tares" world, how unusually blessed faithful members are to have the precious and constant gift of the Holy Ghost with reminders of what is right and of the covenants we have made. "For behold, . . . the Holy Ghost . . . will show unto you all things what ye should do" (2 Nephi 32:5). Whatever the decibels of decadence, these need not overwhelm the still, small voice! Some of the best sermons we will ever hear will be thus prompted from the pulpit of memory—to an audience of one!

Follow the Brethren

While living amid the foreseen "distress of nations, with perplexity" (Luke

21:25; see also D&C 88:79), members also have prophetic leadership which provides direction. Several times a year we sustain fifteen Apostles as prophets, seers, and revelators. So we know to whom to look, even though there are a few members who "seek not the welfare of Zion" and "set themselves up for a light" (2 Nephi 26:29). Furthermore, the Prophet Joseph clearly taught that recipients of that Apostleship possess "all the keys that ever were, or that can be, conferred upon mortal man" (cited by Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 1:137).

Repetitive experience teaches Church members that we need not be prey to pretenders. Besides, "the day cometh that they who will not hear the voice of the Lord, . . . neither give heed to the words of the prophets and apostles, shall be cut off from among the people" (D&C 1:14).

Additionally, the very process of Church government also ensures that we do not have secret leaders:

"It shall not be given to any one to go forth to preach my gospel, or to build up my church, except he be ordained by some one who has authority, and it is known to the church that he has authority and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the church" (D&C 42:11).

President Wilford Woodruff urged the Church flock to follow the Brethren because, he said, "the very moment that men in this kingdom attempt to run ahead or cross the path of their leaders, . . . they are in danger of being injured by the wolves. . . . I have never in my life known it to fail" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 5:83).

Further help comes to us through sermons, the sacrament, the holy temple, prayers, the scriptures, tithing settlements, and admonitions from loved ones. However, when members cut themselves off from all of these, then there is trouble. For instance, it is from estranged and self-justifying lips that some devastated spouses hear those terrible words, "I never loved you!"

Orthodoxy ensures balance

With the enemy combined, it is so vital to keep "in the right way" (Moroni 6:4). Orthodoxy in thought and behavior brings safety and felicity as the storms come, including "every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14). Happily, amid such winds the Holy Ghost not only helps us recognize plain truth but also plain nonsense!

Orthodoxy ensures balance between the gospel's powerful and correct principles. In the body of gospel doctrine, not only are justice and mercy "fitly joined together [for] effectual working," but so is everything else! (Ephesians 4:16). But the gospel's principles do require synchronization. When pulled apart from each other or isolated, men's interpretations and implementations of these doctrines may be wild.

Love, if not checked by the seventh commandment, could become carnal. The fifth commandment's laudable emphasis upon honoring parents, unless checked by the first commandment, could result in unconditional loyalty to errant parents rather than to God.

Care is even needed in our renderings between God and Caesar (see Matthew 22:21). Even patience is balanced by "reproving betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost," *betimes* meaning early or soon (D&C 121:43). Spiritual poise also includes both taking time to smell the flowers and noticing the leaves on the fig tree to see if "summer is nigh" (Matthew 24:32).

Thus, the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ is greater than any of its parts and larger than any of its programs or principles!

"Armed with righteousness"

Even during these difficult times, members "armed with righteousness" can

do so many things (1 Nephi 14:14). We can have love at home, even though the love of many waxes cold in the world (see Matthew 24:12). We can have inner peace even though peace has been taken from the earth (see D&C 1:35).

We can keep the seventh commandment even though others break it and mock it. We can render individualized, humanitarian service even though the mass of human suffering seems so overwhelming.

We can use our tongues to speak the truth in love, while refusing to use them to bear false witness (see Ephesians 4:15; Exodus 20:16). We can stand fast "in holy places" even though in the world "all things shall be in commotion" (D&C 45:32; 88:91).

We can reach for "hands which hang down" even if some refuse our proffered hands of friendship (D&C 81:5). We can hold to the iron rod even if others slip away and a few end up mocking us from the "great and spacious building" (1 Nephi 8:26; see also 8:27-28).

Like Nephi, we may not always know the meaning of things happening to us or around us. Nevertheless, like Nephi, we can still know that God loves us! (see 1 Nephi 11:17).

Yes, "the enemy is combined," but when we are combined with the Lord's "chariots of fire," then "they that be with us are more than they that be with them!" (2 Kings 6:16-17). Furthermore, the divine promise is that no weapon formed against the Lord's work shall finally prosper; "this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord" (Isaiah 54:17; see also D&C 71:9). I so assure; I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen!

President Monson

Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us. We shall now hear from Elder Gene R. Cook of the Seventy.

Elder Gene R. Cook

My dear brothers and sisters, I bear witness this afternoon of the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ and specifically of the doctrine of grace that He extends to all mankind (see Jacob 4:6–7). In so doing, I humbly recognize the great gift the Father has bestowed upon us because He “so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son” (John 3:16).

Seeking the gift of grace

Perhaps some of us have not received or known how to use the great gift of grace the Father has given to us through the Atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ. “For what doth it profit a man if a gift is bestowed upon him, and he receive not the gift?” (D&C 88:33). The prophet Zenock even said, “Thou art angry, O Lord, with this people, because they will not understand thy mercies which thou hast bestowed upon them because of thy Son” (Alma 33:16).

How many of us, at times, try to resolve life’s challenges ourselves without seeking the intervention of the Lord in our lives? We try to carry the burden alone.

As some are faced with trials and afflictions, they ask, “Why won’t God help me?” Some have even struggled with doubts about their prayers and their personal worthiness and say, “Perhaps prayer doesn’t work.”

Others who have suffered with sickness, discouragement, financial crisis, rejection, disappointment, and even loss of loved ones may ask, “Why won’t the Lord heal me or help me with my son? Why didn’t He prevent my daughter’s death? Does life have to be this unhappy?”

Yes, one might even cry out: “O God, where art thou? . . . How long shall thy hand be stayed?” (D&C 121:1–2).

Jesus taught that we pass through all these trials to refine us “in the furnace of affliction” (1 Nephi 20:10) and that we should not bear them unaided but “in [the] Redeemer’s name” (D&C 138:13).

In spite of our feeling, at times, that He has forgotten us, He testifies: “Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. . . . Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands” (1 Nephi 21:15–16).

I testify that the Lord, through His grace, can continually assist us in our daily lives and in our physical and mental sicknesses, pains, transgressions, and even in all of our infirmities (see Mosiah 14:5; Alma 7:11–13; 34:31).

Centering our eyes and hearts on Christ

However, to pass successfully through the trials we encounter, we must keep our eyes and our hearts centered on the Lord Jesus Christ. “Since man had fallen he could not merit anything of himself” (Alma 22:14); therefore, we needed an advocate, an intercessor, a mediator to assist us. “And it is *because of thy Son* that thou hast been thus merciful unto [us]” (Alma 33:11; italics added).

We should have great hope in knowing, however unworthy we may feel or weak we may be, *that if we will do all we can*, He will come to our aid and provide for us whatever we may lack (see 2 Corinthians 12:9). That statement, to some degree, defines grace.

Understanding grace

Grace is a “divine means of help or strength, given through the bounteous mercy and love of Jesus Christ.” It is “an enabling power” (Bible Dictionary, p. 697). The doctrine of the grace of the Father and the Son and how it affects us is so significant that it is mentioned more than two hundred times in the standard works.

If we can obtain the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that divine enabling power to assist us, we will triumph in this life and be exalted in the life to come.

Let me share with you five principles that may help us obtain that divine intervention in our own lives or perhaps vicar-

iously assist in the life of another. These principles are simple to understand but most challenging to apply. You already know all of them. However, you may not have considered how directly related they are to obtaining grace.

Faith: our access to grace

The first principle is *faith*. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace" (Romans 5:1-2).

It is evident that this grace, or enabling power, is accessed by faith. No wonder faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the first principle of the gospel.

How clear Christ's question was to a sinking Peter, after he had walked on the water: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matthew 14:31). The moment Peter doubted and took his eyes off the Savior, he severed himself from the power of Jesus Christ that had sustained him on the water.

How many times, likewise, as we have prayed for assistance or help with our problems, have we severed ourselves from the power of God because of doubt or fear, and thus could not obtain this enabling power of God? (see D&C 6:36; 67:3).

Repentance: being restored unto grace

Repentance is the second principle. The grace of the Lord through the Atonement can both cleanse us of sin and assist us in perfecting ourselves through our trials, sicknesses, and even character defects. We are both sanctified and justified through the grace of the Lord (see D&C 20:30-31). Truly, "as a man his sins confesses, Christ, in mercy, manifests" (Gene R. Cook and Holly Cook, "I Am a Healthy Man" [unpublished hymn]; see also Alma 24:10). Remember, Christ can repair our flaws and failings that otherwise are not repairable (see Genesis 18:14; Mark 9:23-24).

That great truth ought to fill us all with hope, as long as we are quick to remember that the effect of grace in our lives is conditioned upon repenting of our sins.

"Therefore, blessed are they who will repent. . . . And may God grant . . . that men might be brought unto repentance and good works, that they might be restored unto grace for grace, according to their works" (Helaman 12:23-24).

A repentant heart and good works are the very conditions required to have grace restored to us. When someone pleads fervently in prayer for an answer, the answer may be more conditioned on repentance of personal sins than on any other factor (see D&C 101:7-8; Mosiah 11:23-24).

Humility: an essential condition

The third principle is *humility*. "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6).

"And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me" (Ether 12:27).

Humility is an essential condition of obtaining this divine assistance.

Works: doing all we can do

Doing all in your own power is the fourth principle. Truly did Paul teach, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Yes, works alone cannot bring that divine gift, but they are a key condition upon which the gift is received (see 2 Nephi 10:23-25). "For we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do" (2 Nephi 25:23).

Thus, unless one has done all in his own power, he cannot expect the grace of

God to be manifest. What a glorious principle to understand: the Lord's assistance to us—whether we have strong faith or weak faith; whether a man, a woman, or a child—is not based just on what we know, how strong we are, or who we are, but more upon our *giving all that we can give and doing all that we can do* in our present circumstance. Once one has given all he can, then the Lord, through His grace, will assist him (see D&C 123:17).

Clearly, the Lord's role and our role in our receiving divine help come into clear perspective in these inspired words: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

Obedience: then is his grace sufficient

The fifth principle, *keeping the commandments*, surely is a condition for receiving the grace of the Lord: "If you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness . . . ; therefore, . . . you shall receive grace for grace" (D&C 93:20; see also 93:28).

To obtain grace, one does not have to be perfect, but he does have to be trying to keep the commandments the best that he can. Then the Lord will allow him to receive that power.

Moroni sums up the doctrine of grace succinctly:

"If ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; . . .

" . . . Then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ" (Moroni 10:32–33).

Hope through Jesus Christ

What glorious gospel news is an understanding of this doctrine of grace, which persuades us to more fully center our faith and hope upon Jesus Christ. Through the grace of the Father, we will better know how to come unto the Son. (See 1 Nephi 15:14–15.)

Let us be submissive to the Father's will, recognizing that it is preeminent. How thankful we ought to be to submit to His will because He and His Son will never do anything "save it be for the benefit of the world" (2 Nephi 26:24).

By seeking the intercession of the Lord more fully in our lives—

- We will "grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth" (D&C 50:40).

- We will "teach . . . diligently and [His] grace shall attend [us]" (D&C 88:78).

- We will, for our labor, "receive the grace of God, that [we] might wax strong in the Spirit, . . . that [we] might teach with power and authority from God" (Mosiah 18:26).

- We will not "fall from grace" (D&C 20:32).

- We will "receive grace for grace" (D&C 93:20).

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

I bear witness that if we will seek the grace of God, He will come to our aid and the aid of our loved ones in times of need. Let us obey the Lord in all things and offer to Him the ultimate sacrifice of "a broken heart and a contrite spirit" (3 Nephi 9:20; see also 3 Nephi 12:19).

"Seek this Jesus"

Now, as one of the Lord's Seventy and as an especial witness of Christ to bear witness of His name in all the world and "to prepare a way before [His] face" (D&C 124:139), I bear witness of the majesty of the Father and of the Son.

I testify that Jesus Christ lives, that He is as capable of intervening in the lives of men today as He was in the days of old when He walked among men.

I bear personal witness before the Church of the touch of the Master's hand in my own life in healing me from an incurable illness. I bear testimony also of His personal direction in my life, through

a loving and yet chastening hand of correction, to refine my soul, deepen my feelings, grant a remission of my sins, and fill my soul with the love of God.

Let no trial or affliction, my brothers and sisters, ever separate us from the love of God and the true love of Christ (see Romans 8:31, 35–39).

May we “seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of them, may be and abide in [us] forever” (Ether 12:41). May the grace of God always be with you (see Romans 16:20), I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just heard from Elder Gene R. Cook of the Seventy. Thank you, Elder Cook, for that message.

Elder Neil L. Andersen

A prayer for support

My dear brothers and sisters, words are so inadequate to express how humble and overwhelmed I feel at receiving this special calling. Throughout my life, as I have heard the General Authorities speak and felt the power of their messages, I have gained a great reverence for the sacred role they perform in the Church. Now to be invited to sit with them and assist them in building the kingdom of God is a privilege I feel faint in accepting. I pray for your support, for your faith and prayers that I might measure up. I ask for your patience and for the patience of my Brethren who will be my tutors. More than anything, I pray for the help of our Heavenly Father and his Son, for without their help and direction I will surely fail.

Thanks for family and Saints

I am grateful for my wonderful companion, Kathy. She makes goodness look

On Saturday, March 13, 1993, following a four-state regional conference in Colorado Springs, Colorado, Elder Marvin J. Ashton experienced a nasal hemorrhage requiring medical attention. It has been deemed wise at this time not to burden him with delivery of his conference message. Our prayers are with you, Brother Ashton, and our suggestion is that you keep the message you prepared in a handy place for October conference.

We shall therefore be pleased to hear testimonies from our new General Authorities—Elder Neil Linden Andersen, who will first speak to us, followed by Elder David Todd Christofferson—who were sustained yesterday as members of the Seventy. Elder Andersen and Elder Christofferson, if you will take that first long walk now.

easy, and the purity of her spirit keeps our family focused on the simple yet saving truths of the gospel. I’m so thankful for the valiant and precious children that have been entrusted to us. I love them dearly and appreciate so much their willingness to support me in this new calling. I have been blessed with goodly parents. My parents are now serving as proselyting missionaries in the Georgia Macon Mission. Even before I knew the Church was true, I knew that they knew. I am so appreciative of Kathy’s parents and their example of unselfish giving and for our brothers and sisters who live the gospel in quiet yet dedicated ways.

Our family returned nine months ago from a mission in southern France. I want to express my great love for the members in France. It was in France twenty years ago that I began to glimpse what seeking first the kingdom of God really meant. And living among these French Saints during the last three years has motivated

our family to a much greater consecration. I am so grateful for the tremendous missionaries who served there with us and taught us that uncompromising faith will always prevail in a doubting and cynical world.

Finally, I am thankful for the good Saints and members in our home state of Florida, who have strengthened us through our many years there together.

Pledge and testimony

I have heard President Monson say, "Whom the Lord calls, the Lord qualifies." I know this is true, and it gives me hope looking beyond my own inadequacies. I know that when we are on the Lord's errand, he will be with us, he will strengthen us, he will build our capacities. I have experienced it. I have felt his lifting Spirit. In the months and years ahead, I will need him so very much.

I pledge all that I am to this sacred calling. I promise to be teachable, and I pray that I can be sufficiently meek that the Lord can mold and strengthen my spirit to accomplish his purposes. I commit to you and to the Lord that I will consecrate myself to advancing the cause of the Restoration and to loyally following his chosen leaders.

I know that our Heavenly Father lives and that he loves each one of us. I know that Jesus is the Christ and that he lovingly offers the way to our forgiveness. I know that through the Prophet Joseph Smith the Church of Jesus Christ was restored to the earth and that the true priesthood authority of God is in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I pray that I may always be valiant in that testimony and to these eternal truths, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson

Knowing that I might be invited to speak today, my daughter left me a kind note this morning, and at the end she added, "P.S. Don't trip." So far so good.

Serving the Lord sanctifies us

Not long after I was ordained a deacon, my bishop, Leon Walker, asked me into his office to give me an assignment. He handed me a bright key, the key to the chapel, and charged me with responsibility to help look after the building. I considered myself one of the most fortunate boys in the world to have an assignment from my priesthood president. I thought this would not be a difficult task. My home was just a one-minute bicycle ride away from the building. But I soon learned what I suppose all bishops know, and that is that everybody in the ward seems to have a key to the building. As

soon as I had the building locked up on an evening, someone came along behind me and opened a door. As soon as I had opened a Primary classroom, some diligent soul was there behind me to lock it up again. I could hardly stay on top of that job.

But I began to learn then, as I have come to understand since, that any call, any service in our Lord's cause sanctifies us. Whether it is performed in the glare of the public eye or in a quiet corner known only to God is of no consequence. What matters is that we do serve, for by serving we keep our covenants with Deity, and in those covenants is the promise of salvation.

Thanks to family and mentors

Today I honor and express my love to those who taught me the covenants and

in so many other ways blessed my life: a noble father, a blessed mother, grandparents, great-grandparents, extended family, and mentors and friends both in and out of the Church. My children cannot yet fully understand how deeply they bless my life by their loyalty to the Savior and his gospel. I honor them for that. Those who know my Kathy have observed that I married much above myself, a conclusion I heartily agree with. Our marriage is a gratifying thing, and I have not adequate words to express my love.

"I know in whom I have trusted"

As I have agonized in recent hours over the acceptability and adequacy of my offering upon the altar of him who gave his all, it has come to me that I must focus outwardly, that as I seek the interest of his flock and lose myself in their service, his grace shall be sufficient for me. I so commit myself unreservedly.

I readily attest to the reality and greatness of our God, to his goodness and grace, to his justice and mercy, to the truth of his gospel and the power of his priesthood and the authenticity of the calling of his latter-day seers. At the outset of this ministry, I acknowledge that anything I may achieve will be by virtue of the power and the grace and the gift of God. I am not, in Isaiah's words, "the axe [that

shall] boast itself against him that heweth therewith"; I am not the saw that shall "magnify itself against him that shaketh it" (Isaiah 10:15). With Nephi, "I know in whom I have trusted" (2 Nephi 4:19).

I am particularly gratified, and it is of great significance to me, that I may at any moment and in any circumstance approach through prayer the throne of grace, that my Heavenly Father will hear my petition, and that my Advocate, he who did no sin, whose blood was shed, will plead my cause (see D&C 45:3-5). I rely heavily on that access to God, which he gives to all his children, for he is indeed no respecter of persons, and he that asks shall receive. I so witness in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have heard from Elders Neil L. Andersen and D. Todd Christofferson, new members of the First Quorum of the Seventy. It's wonderful to hear the testimonies of these two Brethren.

The choir and congregation will now join in singing "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet." Sister Chieko N. Okazaki, first counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, will then speak to us.

The choir and congregation sang "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet."

Sister Chieko N. Okazaki

Cat's cradle—a network of kindness

My dear brothers and sisters, aloha! Today I want to share some thoughts with you about how Christian service connects all of us in a network of kindness that is strong and beautiful. As the Apostle Paul promised the Colossian Saints, our hearts can be "knit together in love" (Colossians 2:2).

Do you see this piece of string? It's just an ordinary piece of string—not very

interesting. When I was growing up on the big island of Hawaii, all of us kids used to keep a piece of string like this handy to play with. Now a string doesn't look like much, but look what you can do with it!

This particular cat's cradle pattern is called four-eyes. Do you see how complex and beautiful it is? Do you see how each part supports the other parts and is connected to them? You cannot pick one

part out without destroying the whole pattern. It is the same with our lives. We meet many people. With some, the association lasts for years. With others, the association is very brief. But in either case we can make the pattern a beautiful one by making our encounter a kindly one, filled with the desire to serve.

Our small thread in a great tapestry

President Hinckley said something that I just love about our patterns of interconnectedness in the Church. He said: "To those of the Church, all within the sound of my voice, I give the challenge [to] . . . never lose sight of the whole majestic and wonderful picture of the purpose of this, the dispensation of the fulness of times. Weave beautifully your small thread in the grand tapestry, the pattern for which was laid out for us by the God of heaven" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1989, p. 71; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, p. 54).

We may not know what contribution our small thread makes to the great tapestry. We may not understand the pattern that our lives make as they intersect, connect, separate, and intersect again—but God does. Of course it was no accident that the angel who rebuked the erring Alma the Younger in a "voice of thunder" was the same angel who returned to Alma, now twenty years a missionary, to say, "Blessed art thou, Alma; . . . for thou hast been faithful" (Mosiah 27:11; Alma 8:15). Their lives made a shining pattern.

Sister Rosetta Colclough Stark

Let me tell you about a woman who has woven her strand of kindness and compassion into my life. Sister Rosetta Colclough, a missionary in Hawaii, came to my junior high when I was eleven and invited all the students to a special religion class taught at the little Mormon chapel near the school. Three other Japanese girls and I, all Buddhists, accepted the invitation. That was the

beginning of my Christian instruction, and four years later I joined the Church.

Last March I received a letter from Rosetta Colclough Stark, now living in Arizona. She enclosed in her letter a little article she had written for her ward newsletter in 1978, fifteen years ago, describing those religion classes:

"One day on the eleven o'clock period, only four [Japanese girls] came to class. I was very disappointed there were so few. . . . [But] near the close of the period, we stood in the little chapel with bowed heads and closed eyes, repeating in unison the Lord's Prayer. The soft Hawaiian sun filtered through the windows. As we prayed, I suddenly felt a bright light envelop us, coming from above like an inverted cone. A wonderful feeling of peace and joy filled my heart. I led the prayer very slowly as the bright light enfolded us. I was sure the girls felt it also, as their faces shone with an expression of deep reverence. We almost whispered 'good-bye' so as not to break the spell, and they tiptoed out. I thought, 'One or more of those girls will join the Church and become a great influence for good.'"

She continued: "[After] I returned home, often the sweet faces of those four girls passed before my inward eyes, and I wondered about them. There was one, Chieko Nishimura, that lingered in my mind, and I often looked at the picture I had taken of them.

"Ten years later, my husband and I were attending our sacrament meeting in the Imperial Ward, Salt Lake City, when it was announced that a young Japanese couple from Hawaii would be the speakers. . . . My heart nearly jumped up into my throat. Yes, it was my little Chieko. . . . Chieko and I had a joyous reunion after the meeting. We marveled that out of all the many wards in that big city, they should have come to speak at my ward. We were sure the Lord had a hand in it."

Rosetta lost track of me after my husband and I moved to Colorado but was

surprised and delighted, when she was watching the Relief Society sesquicentennial broadcast on March 14, 1992, to hear my name announced. That afternoon she sat down at her typewriter in Arizona and began her letter to me. She said:

"[When] I heard your name announced by Sister Jack . . . I sat up straight and watched the TV screen eagerly and saw your name appear on the screen. Then you started to speak. The dark hair has turned to silver, but that sweet face was easily recognized. Yes, this is my little Chieko whom I taught at the Honomakau chapel in Kohala so many years ago. As I listened to your voice, tears of joy ran down my cheeks. . . .

"I thank my Heavenly Father that I had the privilege of teaching you about Jesus Christ our Savior in that little chapel. . . . I have been blessed three times because of it; first, that I was there to experience that light from heaven with you; second, that you came to my ward in Salt Lake City to speak; and today, when I heard you speak to the women of the world via satellite."

Rosetta says she was blessed, but Rosetta did not know how she was blessing me with her kindness. Even while she was writing that letter, my husband, Ed, was being taken to the hospital, stricken down by a cardiac arrest on the afternoon of the sesquicentennial broadcast. Her letter reached me with a special compassion and love when my sons and I were struggling to accept the fact that Ed would not recover. I did not see the light she felt while we four little Buddhist girls repeated the Lord's Prayer with her, phrase by phrase. But I know the Spirit whispered to me during that experience, reminding me of my true identity as a daughter of God and prompting me to let those teachings sink deep into my heart so I could also become a daughter of Christ in the waters of baptism.

Rosetta's life has touched mine only three times, but the Savior's love was in

each encounter. Rosetta brought me the gospel, she rejoiced with Ed and me after our baptisms, and she brought me great comfort by reminding me of Heavenly Father's profound love for me when I was suffering such pain while Ed lay dying. I needed that reassurance and love. I needed to remember that Heavenly Father, fifty years earlier, had reached down and laid his hand on a skinny little Buddhist girl and said, "You are my beloved child."

"Knit together in love"

I've shared this story with you because it illustrates so beautifully how our lives weave together in ways we cannot guess or plan. Because Rosetta acted with faith, with kindness, and with love, the pattern created by her life encountering mine is a beautiful one. I know that she has woven shining strands into the lives of many others.

Brothers and sisters, we never know how far the effects of our service will reach. We can never afford to be cruel or indifferent or ungenerous because we are all connected, even if it is in a pattern that only God sees. I am part of the pattern. Rosetta is part of the pattern. You are part of the pattern. And the Savior is part of the pattern. In fact, I like to think that the Savior is the spaces in the pattern, for there would be no pattern at all without them.

May we all deal kindly with one another, seeking in our lives the blessing of the Apostle Paul, that our "hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love" (Colossians 2:2), I pray humbly and sincerely in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Sister Chieko N. Okazaki, first counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, has spoken to us. And in your behalf I'd like to extend a gift to her. All through the years, Sister Okazaki, I have heard our beloved prophet and president,

Ezra Taft Benson, sing praises to your name and to the name of your late husband, Eddie. I'm sure he would wish me to express that again today.

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elders Kwok Yuen Tai and Lowell D. Wood, who were called as members of the Seventy since last April conference.

Elder Kwok Yuen Tai

The view from Victoria Peak

There is a popular tourist spot in Hong Kong known as Victoria Peak. On a clear day one can stand on the peak and enjoy a panoramic view of the bustling harbor together with the beautiful waterfront lined with skyscrapers and ferry piers. From that peak, if one looks carefully, it is possible to see the distant airport with its busy air traffic and its runway extending to the sea. At night the view from the peak is even more breathtaking. The harbor is ablaze with countless lights glittering like diamonds. It is a glorious scene!

The picture, however, is not always the same. On a foggy day the scene can be dark, gloomy, and quite a disappointment. Life is so much like that for many of us. At times it can be glorious but other times gloomy.

Growing up with Aunt Gu Ma

In my early childhood I lost both my parents. Aunt Gu Ma, a spinster sister of my father, kept my brother and me together. She brought us up in a little farming village where she grew vegetables for a living. Every morning she would carry the produce to the market in two big baskets, one on each end of a long pole resting on her shoulders. Then she would bring home rice and meat purchased with the proceeds of her vegetable sales.

I can remember cooking rice in a huge wok on top of a reed-burning stove. I was then six years old. The wok was so big that my brother and I had to lift it together, each standing on a stool while grasping a handle on opposite sides. Our

occasional dinner special was either half-cooked or burnt rice, or both.

Aunt Gu Ma was a wonderful person. Although she had no formal education, she had a noble philosophy of life. She instilled in us correct principles, stern self-reliance, and the value of hard work. We are forever grateful for her love and sacrifice in our behalf.

Seek divine guidance

I remember especially one occasion. My brother and I were returning from school during the aftermath of a severe tropical storm. The trail that we usually followed had been covered by a mud slide. Being the resourceful young boys that we were, we decided that nothing could keep us from going home. On a nearby steep hillside was a drainage pipe situated quite high above the rocky ground. If we were to get to our village, we would need to walk along that pipe. The pipe was suspended over a stream which, although normally small, had turned into a rushing torrent of mud and water. Carrying our school bags, we went up the hill and continued our expedition.

We both began cautiously treading along the narrow, slippery drainage pipe. As I approached the other side, I looked back to see how my brother was doing. I was startled to see that he had made his way only halfway and had come to a complete stop. He, being older and wiser, had realized what a precarious perch we were on and had instinctively frozen in his tracks, unable to continue. It was a terrifying moment for us as we realized the danger he was in, paralyzed by fear and perched there on a slippery, narrow

drainage pipe suspended above a torrential river.

Then I got a big surprise. I heard the loudest scream for help I have ever heard in my life. His incredible bellow echoed through the hills and valleys. Luckily, Aunt Gu Ma was working in the fields below and heard us. She came quickly to his rescue. She lovingly guided him along and led us both home to safety.

Oftimes we become anxious and fearful as we confront the complexities of life. If we seek divine guidance and follow the gospel path, we will be led to our final destination. Sometimes adversity may seem so overwhelming that we feel powerless to continue. If we appeal for help with humility and faith, our Heavenly Father will provide a way to lovingly help us through.

Conversion and marriage

One day when I was seventeen years of age, I came across a former neighbor of mine. He invited me to attend his church the next Sunday because he was to be a speaker in the meeting. It was there that he gave his two-and-one-half-minute talk and I met the missionaries for the first time. One year later I was baptized in the swimming pool of the Hong Kong Mission Home and became a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Conditions in China during the 1940s were very difficult. One family with a three-month-old child left mainland China and returned to their home in Taiwan. Twenty years later, in 1963, that small child, now a young woman, arrived in Hong Kong for her studies. She responded to the invitation of the missionaries during their tracting and became a member of the Church in 1964.

A year later I returned from my university studies in Sydney, Australia, and became acquainted with that beautiful young woman, Hui Hua, in the Kowloon City branch in Hong Kong. We were married one year later at the Kom Tong Hall

in Hong Kong. The chance of our meeting instills in our minds the idea of a miracle in our lives.

President of the Hong Kong Mission

Little did we know what the Lord had in store for us. Exactly thirty years to the month after my baptism (and also on my birthday), I returned with my wife to the very location of my baptism to preside as mission president of the Hong Kong Mission.

During that three-year term we experienced inexpressible joy in watching people's lives change as they embraced the gospel. The gospel brightened up their lives. Through the gospel, hatred can turn into love, pride into humility, wickedness into righteousness, sorrow into happiness, and fear into peace. The gospel promises us hope of returning to the presence of our Heavenly Father.

The gospel has also given me, an orphan boy, unshakable hope that someday I can be together with my family forever. I may even have a father-and-son outing with my dad to make up for my lost childhood!

"The Lord is my shepherd"

As a special witness of the Lord Jesus Christ, I share the feelings of the Apostle Paul: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3:8).

I express my gratitude for all the opportunities that have come to me in serving our Heavenly Father. He has blessed me with a loving wife and three wonderful children, all of whom are returned missionaries. I am grateful to them for their unfailing support.

The Twenty-third Psalm says in part: "The Lord is my shepherd. . . . He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters" (Psalm 23:1-2). I know God lives. The

Lord is my Shepherd. He has, indeed, made me lie down in green pastures and has led me beside the still waters. Jesus

is the Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. I so testify in His holy name, amen.

Elder Lowell D. Wood

Coming unto Christ is a process

"The Lord declared that it is his work and his glory 'to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man' (Moses 1:39). He has established his Church to help in this great work. Accordingly, the Church's mission is to 'invite all to come unto Christ' (D&C 20:59) and 'be perfected in him' (Moroni 10:32)" (*Melchizedek Priesthood Leadership Handbook* [1990], p. 3).

I would like to discuss at least in part what The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints asks people to do when inviting them "to come unto Christ" (D&C 20:59).

It should be understood that this invitation is not a request to participate in a single event, but to participate in a process. This process leads individuals to eternal life, which "is the greatest of all the gifts of God; for there is no gift greater than the gift of salvation" (D&C 6:13).

"Hear ye him"

How do we begin this most exciting and important process? The Book of Mormon records the events that occurred when Christ, following his resurrection, visited the people of Nephi in the land Bountiful. So important was this event that his Father introduced him, saying, "Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in whom I have glorified my name—*hear ye him*" (3 Nephi 11:7; italics added).

From this introduction we learn the first required action: "*hear ye him*." If we are to come unto Christ, we must first listen to him. We must learn who he is.

Following his Father's introduction, he told the people:

"Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world.

"And behold, I am the light and the life of the world; and I have drunk out of that bitter cup which the Father hath given me, and have glorified the Father in taking upon me the sins of the world, in the which I have suffered the will of the Father in all things from the beginning" (3 Nephi 11:10–11).

He then invited them to come forth one by one and "see with their eyes and . . . feel with their hands" (3 Nephi 11:15). These people experienced personal knowledge of who he was. However, Jesus reminded them that coming to him through faith is even more desirable.

"And again, *more blessed* are they who shall believe in your words because that ye shall testify that ye have seen me, and that ye know that I am. Yea, blessed are they who shall believe in your words" (3 Nephi 12:2; italics added).

We are fortunate to have the scriptures, which contain the words of ancient Apostles and prophets, and to have the privilege of listening to modern-day Apostles and prophets testify of Christ.

Repent and be baptized

What were the next words Jesus gave to the people in Bountiful? Think of all he could have said. He is the creator of this earth and countless others; he had just wrought the infinite atonement; he had just broken the bonds of death; he had just visited with his Father in Heaven. He could have discussed many, many

wonderful and important subjects, but he chose to teach his doctrine, which is:

"And again I say unto you, ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and whoso buildeth upon this buildeth upon my rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them" (3 Nephi 11:38-39).

Not only did the Lord teach the need for baptism, but he called special disciples and gave them power to baptize. He also taught them the correct manner of baptism.

Receive the Holy Ghost

Clearly it is vital on the journey to eternal life to exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repent of our sins, and be baptized in the proper manner by those holding the proper authority and using the proper prayer. After this kind of baptism we can "be visited with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and . . . receive a remission of . . . sins" (3 Nephi 12:2). However, in order to progress we must yield "to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and [put] off the natural man and [become] a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord" (Mosiah 3:19).

As we come unto Christ, we must surrender our worldly ways, our pride, and our selfishness. As we yield to the promptings of the Holy Ghost, we should experience a "mighty change in [our] hearts" and become willing to submit to or accept "all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon [us]" (Alma 5:14; Mosiah 3:19).

Turn life over to God

Life is often difficult. There are trials, disappointments, challenges, sickness, and unemployment even for the Saints. These must be borne with submissive patience, for often these trials are evidence of the Lord's hand preparing us

to be worthy of living with him. To yield to Christ means to put him and his teachings first. The total submission of our will to his is one of the most difficult obstacles we face on our journey toward eternal life. The rewards of this submission are beautifully described by President Ezra Taft Benson:

"Men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that He can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. He will deepen their joys, expand their vision, quicken their minds, strengthen their muscles, lift their spirits, multiply their blessings, increase their opportunities, comfort their souls, raise up friends, and pour out peace" (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], p. 361).

"Son, remember who you are"

Self-control and self-discipline are important virtues that need to be developed in the process of coming unto Christ. In my teenage years, when I was going out to an activity my parents would say, "Son, remember who you are." Is this phrase familiar to you? This short statement effectively reminded me of the trust my parents had in me and of the expectations of loving grandparents and concerned uncles, aunts, and priesthood leaders. It reminded me of my responsibility to be a good example to younger brothers and sisters.

Heavenly Father provides us with a similar request. He asks us to "always remember him" (D&C 20:77, 79) and "to stand as witnesses of [him] at all times and in all things, and in all places that [we] may be in" (Mosiah 18:9).

These reminders provide a simple but effective decision-making tool that can help us develop needed self-control and self-discipline.

Any thought, activity, or action that is compatible with the name, the life, or the teachings of Jesus Christ is acceptable. Any behavior that is not compatible

with his name, his life, or his teachings is not acceptable and should be avoided.

Come to the temple

The process of being perfected requires that we receive special instruction, make sacred covenants, and receive the highest ordinances of the priesthood. These blessings are available only in the temples of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Individuals who come unto Christ must come to his temple.

Invitation to all

It is my prayer that all of us will examine our lives and evaluate where we are in the process of coming unto Christ and being perfected in him. The Book of Mormon promises that if we "come unto him, and offer [our] whole souls as an offering unto him, and *continue in fasting and praying, and endure to the end . . . [we] will be saved*" (Omni 1:26; italics added).

If you have not yet accepted the invitation to come unto him, please do so now. Missionaries of The Church of Jesus

Christ of Latter-day Saints are prepared and eager to teach you the doctrine of Christ. They hold the proper authority, baptize in the proper manner, and use the proper prayer.

If you previously began the process of coming unto Christ but lost your way or took a detour, do not despair; begin again. Come back; come back now! Come unto Christ and enjoy the "fruit of the Spirit," namely "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, [and] temperance," and begin to "walk in the Spirit" and "lay hold upon every good gift" (Galatians 5:22-23, 25; Moroni 10:30).

I testify that he lives, that he is the light and life of the world, that he is our Savior and our Redeemer, and I do it in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

We have just listened to Elders Kwok Yuen Tai and Lowell D. Wood of the Seventy.

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve Apostles will now address us.

Elder L. Tom Perry

President Hinckley and President Monson, Tabernacle Choir, thank you for that inspiring session this morning. I only hope that the spirit of that session will hover over us as we continue this afternoon.

In the Doctrine and Covenants we read, "That they themselves may be prepared, and that my people may be taught more perfectly, and have experience, and know more perfectly concerning their duty, and the things which I require at their hands" (D&C 105:10).

How grateful we are for the scriptures, which contain the Lord's instructions to His children. They help us to better understand the course He has designed as a sure guide to lead us through this period of our mortal probation.

Gospel basics bring change in Peru

Until recently, part of my assignment has included the country of Peru, an area of the world that is experiencing great turmoil. Inflation and internal strife have been robbing the Peruvian people of almost any hope of stability in their lives.

It has been difficult for my Brethren and me to visit Peru regularly because of the dangers of traveling there. It has been necessary for the Peruvian members to assume much more responsibility for priesthood and auxiliary leadership and for full-time missionary service.

The Area Presidency recognized the need to fortify the members of the Church in this country and, after much prayer and fasting, decided to emphasize

just two basic teachings of the gospel. They prepared a letter to be delivered to each family unit in Peru. The theme was "Being Converted to the Lord," and the letter stressed family prayer and family scripture study.

The Area Presidency taught these principles first to the stake presidencies. They in turn instructed their high councils, and from there the teaching was done to bishops. The bishops then instructed their ward members, and a follow-up letter was delivered by the home teachers to each family unit. The fathers were encouraged specifically to lead their families in daily prayer and scripture study.

The blessings that have come to the Peruvian Saints from practicing these two basic gospel principles, daily prayer and scripture study, have been most remarkable. It soon became evident that faith and testimony were increasing among members of the Church there. There has been a significant increase in sacrament meeting attendance, which has resulted in a greater sense of community and increased interest among the Saints in loving and caring for each other. Though travel to the temple has become increasingly difficult and dangerous, temple attendance is up significantly.

The number of full-time missionaries immediately began to increase. Now the five missions in Peru fill their missionary needs with native Peruvians. The full-time missionaries are arriving in the field better prepared to serve, which of course has resulted in increased convert baptisms.

A renewed emphasis on two basic gospel practices—daily prayer and scripture study—created a dramatic change and offered increased spirituality and works among the Saints there.

The success of the Peruvian Saints should teach all of us the importance of adhering to the basics of a gospel-centered life. Let us consider again the blessings promised us if we faithfully practice daily family prayer and daily family scripture study.

Importance of daily prayer

The scriptures are filled with admonitions to stay close to the Lord and call upon His holy name in prayer. In the latter days of Alma's ministry, he instructed his sons on how they should live. After Alma's remarkable conversion, he spent his life proclaiming the gospel and perfecting the Saints. Before he died, he wanted to instill in his sons a desire to be obedient to God's will. To Helaman he said:

"O, remember, my son, and learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God.

"Yea, and cry unto God for all thy support; yea, let all thy doings be unto the Lord, and whithersoever thou goest let it be in the Lord; yea, let all thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord; yea, let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever.

"Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day" (Alma 37:35-37).

Prayer is the primary means of communication between God and man. Prayer is an important part of practically every religion, whether it be Christian or otherwise. The Prophet Joseph Smith, speaking on the subject of prayer, stated:

"We would say to the brethren, seek to know God in your closets, call upon him in the fields. Follow the directions of the Book of Mormon, and pray over, and for your families, your cattle, your flocks, your herds, your corn, and all things that you possess; ask the blessing of God upon all your labors, and everything that you engage in" (*History of the Church*, 5:31).

When we pray to the Lord, we should remember whom we are addressing and be prepared to give Him our undivided attention as we humbly supplicate

Him. President John Taylor counseled us this way:

"Do you have prayers in your family? . . . And when you do, do you go through the operation like the [grinding] of a piece of machinery, or do you bow in meekness and with a sincere desire to seek the blessing of God upon you and your household? That is the way that we ought to do, and cultivate a spirit of devotion and trust in God, dedicating ourselves to him, and seeking his blessings" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 21:118).

As parents it is clearly our duty to teach our children to pray. Regular family prayers establish patterns that literally bless future generations. As Elder Dallin H. Oaks admonished us to do in his great talk in the morning session, it is good to use the sacred pronouns of the scriptures—*thee*, *thou*, *thy*, and *thine*—when addressing Deity in prayer, instead of the more common pronouns *you*, *your*, and *yours*. By doing so we show greater respect to our Heavenly Father.

It is so satisfying to know that God is mindful of us and ready to respond when we place our trust in Him. There is no place for fear among men and women who place their trust in the Almighty, who do not hesitate to humble themselves in seeking divine guidance through prayer. Though difficulties may arise and reverses may come, in our prayers we can find reassurance as the Lord speaks peace to our souls.

On several occasions President Benson has shared the poem "Prayer," by Eliza M. Hickok, with members of the Church. It is a poem he learned while he was in the Aaronic Priesthood:

I know not by what methods rare,
But this I know, God answers prayer.
I know that He has given His Word,
Which tells me prayer is always
heard,
And will be answered, soon or late.
And so I pray and calmly wait.
I know not if the blessing sought
Will come in just the way I thought;

But leave my prayers with Him
alone,

Whose will is wiser than my own,
Assured that He will grant my quest,
Or send some answer far more blest.
[In James Gilchrist Lawson, ed., *The Best Loved Religious Poems* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1933), p. 160]

Among the Peruvian Saints, who live in this nation racked with heartache and despair, there has emerged a stronger faith and devotion to our Father in Heaven because they heeded the counsel of His servants to hold daily family prayer.

Importance of daily scripture study

A special maturing in the gospel has developed among the members of the Church in Peru because they added to their daily family prayers the practice of having daily family scripture study. When the revealed words of the prophets found their way into the hearts of the Saints, they brought about a mighty change in the way they lived and believed. Questions, personal problems, and important concerns were answered by the inspired counsel of the scriptures.

All the standard works of the Church instruct us to read and ponder their sayings. From the Old Testament we read, "Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read" (Isaiah 34:16). From the New Testament, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). Nephi, in the Book of Mormon, observes, "My soul delighteth in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them, and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children" (2 Nephi 4:15). Counsel from the Pearl of Great Price promises, "And whoso treasureth up my word, shall not be deceived" (Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:37). And finally, in the Doctrine and Covenants we read: "First seek to obtain my word. . . . Study

my word which hath gone forth among the children of men" (D&C 11:21-22).

The scriptures are one of our greatest treasures. They contain God's instructions to His people from the beginning of time. In a world so full of the doctrines of men, how grateful we are to have a sure anchor on which to build our faith! Of the Book of Mormon, Elder Marion G. Romney said:

"If our young folks are traditioned in the teachings of the Book of Mormon, they will not only be inspired with righteous courage to choose the right by . . . example, . . . they will also be so schooled in the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ that they will know what is right.

"From almost every page of the book, there will come to them a moving testimony that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of the Living God, our Redeemer and Savior. This witness alone will be a sustaining anchor in every storm" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1960, p. 112).

In the Lord's instructions to His children we find sublime consistency. What the Lord has declared to be right will always be right. What He has declared to be true will always be true. What He has declared to be sinful will always be sinful. Rest assured that when the so-called enlightened doctrines of men contradict the holy scriptures, they will only bring heartache, disappointment, and destruction to the souls of mankind.

President Benson has counseled us concerning searching the scriptures:

"Let us not treat lightly the great things we have received from the . . . Lord! His word is one of the most valuable gifts He has given us. . . . Recommit yourselves to a study of the scriptures. Immerse yourselves in them daily. . . . Read them in your families and teach your children to love and treasure them. Then prayerfully and in counsel with others, seek every way possible to encourage the members of the Church to follow your example" ("The Power of the Word," *Ensign*, May 1986, p. 82).

Recommit to gospel basics

My sincere counsel to you today is to recommit yourselves to these two basic practices that have been the source of so many blessings for the Saints in Peru. Never let a day go by without holding family prayer and family scripture study. Put this, the Lord's program, to the test and see if it does not bless your home with greater peace, hope, love, and faith.

I promise you that daily family prayer and scripture study will build within the walls of your home a security and bonding that will enrich your lives and prepare your families to meet the challenges of today and the eternities to come.

God grant unto us the desire to seek Him reverently and humbly in prayer, and the sincere desire to study His word as contained in His holy scriptures.

God lives! Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world. This is my solemn witness to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Monson

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

Before hearing the closing remarks of President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Counselor in the First Presidency, we express appreciation to the Mormon Youth Chorus; the single-adult choir from the Ephraim, Logan, Ogden, Orem, and Salt Lake institutes; the priesthood choir from Ricks College; and the Tabernacle Choir and to their conductors and organists for the beautiful and inspiring music during the conference.

We thank our city officials for the cooperation given this conference; the doctors, Church Health Unit nurses, and ambulance services who have been on hand to render assistance; the ushers and particularly the interpreters; and those who are responsible for the beautiful flowers on the stand and on Temple Square.

We express appreciation to local and national press representatives for the coverage of the conference.

We are grateful for the owners and operators of the many radio and television stations and cable systems who have given time and made facilities available to carry sessions of the conference in many countries.

We also express gratitude to very special people who have attended throughout all of the sessions yesterday and today: to government representatives, civic representatives, and educational representatives. And particularly do we

express our gratitude to members of the royal family of the kingdom of Tonga, who have been present at every session of this conference. We are grateful and happy to acknowledge to the world that last Sunday the first Tongan stake in Salt Lake City, Utah, was created. We are very grateful for that blessing and every blessing which has come to us.

Following President Hinckley's remarks, the Tabernacle Choir will sing "Abide with Me." The benediction will be offered by Elder Joseph C. Muren of the Seventy, and this conference will then stand adjourned for six months.

President Gordon B. Hinckley

Appreciation for conference

My beloved brethren and sisters, we have had two wonderful days. The Spirit of the Lord has been with us. We have listened to inspired addresses, beautiful prayers, and uplifting music.

These general conferences each six months are occasions to grow in faith and in love for the Lord and His eternal work.

I am confident that each of us has had stirred within himself or herself a resolution to live a little better, to be a little kinder, to serve with less selfishness, to be more worthy of the wonderful blessings the Lord has generously poured out upon us.

President Benson's testimony

It has been customary for the President of the Church to leave a message for us to ponder at the close of each conference. We all regret—how much we regret—that President Benson has been unable to speak to us or attend any of the sessions. However, he has seen and heard all of the sessions and would have me convey his love and a prophet's blessing.

He also would have me repeat his testimony of our Divine Redeemer, who stands as the head of this Church, which

bears His name. I quote now from President Benson's words:

"As witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ we proclaim that He truly is the Savior of all [and is] indeed the Son of God, the Redeemer, the Promised Messiah. No message is more significant than the one He brought. No event is of greater importance than His atoning sacrifice and subsequent resurrection. And no mortal tongue can express sufficient thanks for all that Jesus has done for us.

"We need to know that Christ invites us to come unto Him. 'Behold, he sendeth an invitation unto all men, for the arms of mercy are extended towards them. . . . Yea he saith: Come unto me and ye shall partake of the fruit of the tree of life' (Alma 5:33-34).

"Come, for he stands 'with open arms to receive you' (Mormon 6:17).

"Come, for 'he will console you in your afflictions, and he will plead your cause' (Jacob 3:1).

"'Come unto him, and offer your whole souls as an offering unto him' (Omni 1:26).

"As Moroni closed the record of the Jaredite civilization, he wrote, 'I would commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written'

(Ether 12:41)" (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], p. 10).

"The question is sometimes asked, 'Are Mormons Christians?' We declare," says President Benson, "the divinity of Jesus Christ. We look to Him as the only source of our salvation. We strive to live His teachings, and we look forward to the time that He shall come again on this earth to rule and reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. In the words of a Book of Mormon prophet, we say to men today, 'There [is] no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent' (Mosiah 3:17)" (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p. 10).

I urge you to accept and ponder that testimony from him whom we sustain as prophet, seer, and revelator.

President Benson, we know that you can see us. All of us participating in this conference—many, many thousands in the aggregate—express our love for you and invoke the blessings of the Lord upon you. We sustain you as our prophet. We embrace you as our leader. We thank you for the mighty work you have done in leading this people in truth and righteousness. May God bless you, our beloved friend, our prophet, and our President.

Appreciation for Church members

And now, brothers and sisters, there are two or three minutes left, and I wish to express in behalf of my Brethren my very deep appreciation to the members of the Church everywhere for your great kindness to us, for your sustaining vote concerning our responsibilities. The adversary is abroad in the earth. He would seek to destroy this work, but if we are united, all of us, his efforts will be of no avail. The work of the Lord will go on and grow in majesty and power and strength across the world. We have seen today and during these past few days the

majesty and the wonder and the power of this, the work of God.

A work of miracles

As we heard Sister Okazaki speak to us this afternoon, we were touched by the power of the Spirit to reach into the heart of a little girl in Hawaii, a girl of non-Christian upbringing, and touch that heart until she came to believe, and believing came to know. As we have listened to the testimony of Brother Kwok Yuen Tai, we have again sensed the miracle and the wonder of this work. This little Chinese boy in Hong Kong came to a meeting at the invitation of a friend, and his heart was touched over a period of time. I remember those days when he was a boy in Hong Kong when he joined the Church. I next saw him in Sydney, Australia, where he was getting a degree in chemistry. Then he was in London working for a great chemical organization, and then handling the work of that organization in Taiwan and Hong Kong. The Lord has led him, guided him. He has since served as a mission president and now serves as a General Authority of the Church.

Those miracles—and miracles they are—are occurring all across this world. This is a work of miracles, and the power of the Spirit is resting upon the heads of men and women and boys and girls all across the globe. Someone has said that the Holy Ghost can teach us things that we cannot teach one another. How true that is. How wonderfully true that is! Said the prophet Jeremiah:

"And I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:

"And I will give you pastors according to mine heart" (Jeremiah 3:14-15).

That is the miracle that is taking place.

Beloved friends and associates, we wish for each of you a safe return to your homes. We invoke the blessings of heaven upon you that there may be peace

and love in your homes and in your hearts. Please accept our love. We pray for you. We want you to know that. We know that you pray for us, and we thank you. Accept our testimony, which is the same testimony that each of you can bear, that God our Eternal Father lives, our Father, the ruler and the governor of the universe, to whom we may look and with whom we may speak in prayer. Jesus is the Christ, the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh, the Son of the living God, who gave his life to atone for the

sins of all mankind. These two visited the earth to usher in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times, and conferred upon him who became Prophet great and grand keys which are the bedrock of this work. Such is our faith; such is our witness; such is our testimony in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Abide with Me."

Elder Joseph C. Muren offered the benediction.

SUMMARY OF CONFERENCE MUSIC

The Mormon Youth Chorus, conducted by Robert C. Bowden, sang at the Saturday morning session of the conference. Bonnie L. Goodliffe and Linda S. Margetts were the organists.

Music for the Saturday afternoon session was provided by a single-adult choir from the Ephraim, Logan, Ogden, Orem, and Salt Lake institutes, directed by Richard L. Openshaw. Richard L. Elliott was the organist.

At the general priesthood session, a priesthood choir from Ricks College provided the music. Clyde Luke and Kevin Brower conducted the choir, and Clay Christiansen was the organist.

The Tabernacle Choir, conducted by Jerold Ottley and Donald Ripplinger, provided music for the Sunday morning and afternoon sessions. John Longhurst and Clay Christiansen were the organists.

Throughout the conference sessions, prelude, postlude, and interlude music and accompaniments on the Tabernacle organ were played by John Longhurst, Clay Christiansen, Richard L. Elliott, Bonnie L. Goodliffe, and Linda S. Margetts.

F. Michael Watson

Clerk of the conference

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